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DECEMBER 1957

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Dancer of the Year

BERIOSOVA *in Cranko's* The Lady and the Fool

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA

EACH year at this time DANCE AND DANCERS makes its citation for Dancer of the Year—the dancer in British ballet who has either had most influence or revealed most development. This year the choice has fallen upon Svetlana Beriosova, one of the ballerinas of the Royal Ballet.

Beriosova's rise to the first half-dozen or so in British ballet has been gradual but inevitable. She arrived in England ten years ago as a star. In 1950, when she was still only 18 years old, she joined the Royal Ballet, and since then the star has become a ballerina. Although she has been ranked as a ballerina since 1955 it has been during the past year that she has indisputably shown the qualities of ballerinadom, which go far beyond any civil-service-style classification.

The year started for Beriosova with the unique honour of creating the leading rôle in the first entirely new British full-length ballet—the Cranko/Britten *Prince of the Pagodas*. Other leading rôles that have fallen to her during 1957 have been La Cappriciosa in *The Lady and the Fool*, the Black Queen in *Checkmate*, and, during the current North American tour, Fonteyn's parts in *The Firebird* and *La Péri*.

Yet of even more significance than the rôles she has acquired during the past year has been the development of her actual dancing. There had for a little time previously been a certain coldness in her dancing. The spontaneity that had distinguished her when she was very young disappeared, and yet she had not really found herself as a mature dancer. Her performances were always interesting and some, her first Giselles for example, achieved much more, yet for the most part she seemed unable to fulfil her full potentiality. In 1957 the curtains parted on the fully mature Beriosova. Of course, she is still remarkably young, and with reasonable luck can expect at least 15 years of ever-increasing mastery, but now at last the way ahead seems clear.

December 1957 8th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 8 No. 12

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE A. BARNES
Assistant Editor E. C. MASON
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

Keeping the Standard Up

THIS is the season of goodwill and on looking back over the past year it appears that it has come not a moment too soon. There is hardly a ballet director in existence who has not thrown this magazine around his office because he has been offended in some way by something that we have said. Quite a rumpus we have unwittingly caused! But although goodwill should be spread around, it does not mean that there is any call to retract.

My belief is as strong now as it has been for the past thirty years, that ballet is the art which brings all nations together on a common meeting-ground provided that it keeps clear of all political implications. In these days, when rockets are flying through the air, either in search of another planet or as a means of destruction on this earth, people are confused and anxious. There is a new age opening up and, like anybody facing the unknown, the rewards and horrors cannot fully be envisaged; at such moments fear creeps in. To readers of this magazine—you would hardly read it if you were not interested in the dance—ballet is the one stable art which helps you to keep a grip on life. But because there is a vital need for a tranquillizer of this kind, there is not the slightest reason for any lowering of standards; less, in fact, than ever before. The longer you live, the more chance you have of seeing the great ballets done as they should be, and thus obtain high standards by which you can judge what is happening to ballet today. The standards attained since the war have not always been high enough, not by a long chalk; it is no good anybody telling us that they have been.

Therefore if, as so frequently happens, we appear unsympathetic and rude it is because the standards we believe in have not been reached. Admittedly it is necessary to fill a theatre and to do that it is essential to give the public what it wants. But it is also possible to give the public what it wants and to keep the standard as high as it possibly can be. Unfortunately this is not what always happens, and nothing like enough care is paid to production, lighting and make-up, let alone to dancing. It is not good enough for a director to tell us that the performance was not the best because it was for a matinee audience, a Monday audience, or a provincial audience. That audience will, in its turn, come to accept the second-rate and gradually the whole art of ballet will descend to the third or even tenth-rate. It is the beginning of the end.

It is only by learning from, and adhering to, the great traditions that the past four hundred years have bequeathed to us, plus the knowledge that ballet must advance and search for new forms and ideas, that we can hope to have a permanent place in the future. This we must always keep in mind.

The Editor and Staff send greetings for Christmas and for brighter prospects in the New Year to readers wherever they may be in the world.

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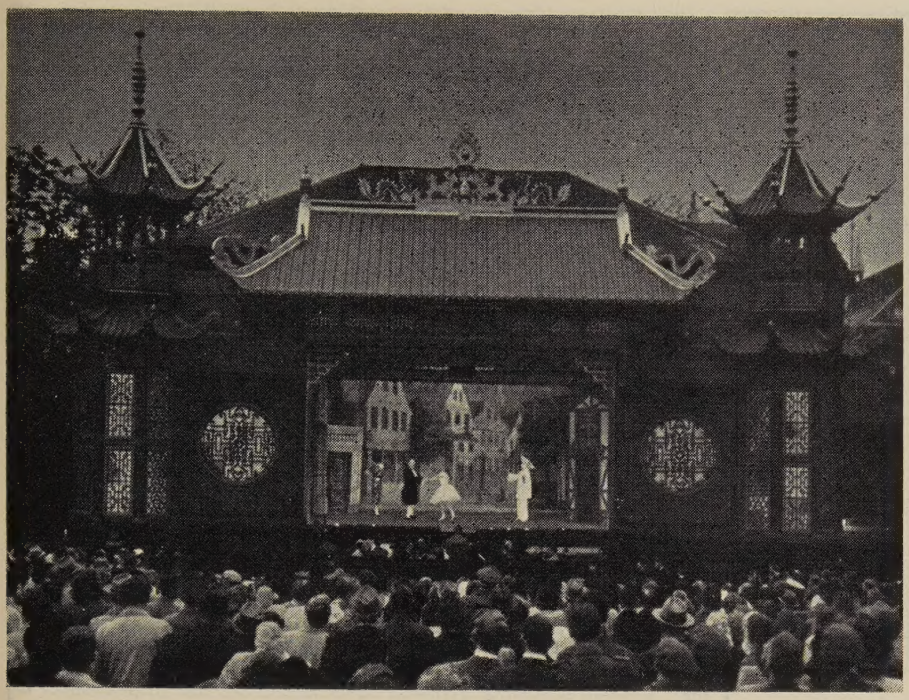
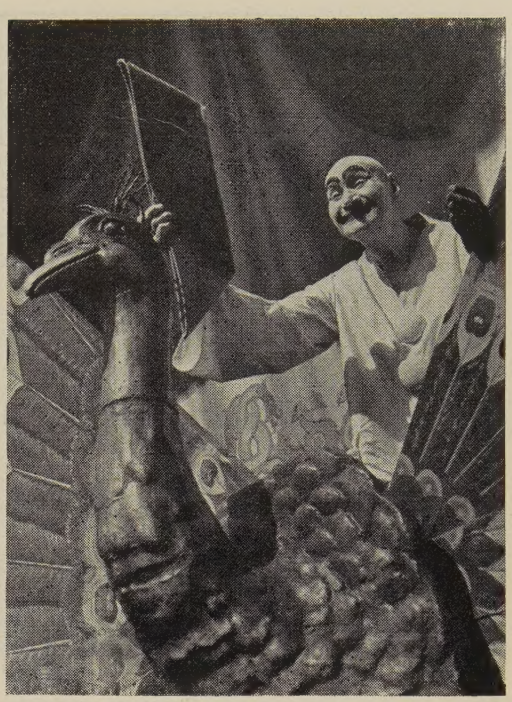


PANTOMIME IN PROGRESS: A typical scene in Copenhagen's Tivoli where the Pantomime Theatre plays every evening during the summer months. It is hoped to be able to reconstruct something of this theatre and its atmosphere during the company's visit to London.



PEACOCK AND PIERROT: At the end of each performance Pierrot makes a speech to the children. He is seen behind the famous peacock curtain.

The Last Survivor—but still going strong

The story of Copenhagen's Tivoli Pantomime Theatre which is visiting London for the first time during the coming Christmas season. The company, which has been playing in Copenhagen for 250 years, is the last survivor of the Italian Commedia dell'Arte whose origin is lost somewhere in the dawn of time.

IN that mezzanine period between a Danish summer day and evening, a sudden hush falls on Tivoli. The famous Copenhagen amusement park, whose shaded avenues, pretty pavilions and sideshows have been echoing to delighted children's noises and the quieter buzz of their adult escorts during the daylight hours, takes on a new air of expectancy. Dusk is the time when Copenhageners assemble to watch a comedy whose origin lies somewhere on the threshing floors of ancient Greece. They assemble before the enchanting *chinoiserie* theatre. The orchestra starts to play some infectious tunes by Denmark's equivalent to Johann Strauss—H. C. Lumbye. The tail of the peacock curtain folds down like a fan and the bird's neck and head descends into the stage. The show is about to begin.

What follows is very similar to British pantomime as it was given in the last century—not as it is given today with its nearer-to-revue formula. The comedy of Harlequin, Columbine, Pierrot and their traditional friends and enemies, has come to rest on the Baltic and far from its original home on the Mediterranean. These characters had, for centuries, been delighting audiences in the palaces and open squares of cities and hamlets across Europe, but they did not arrive in Denmark until 1707. It was a German company, the Beltheim Theatre Gang, who first brought the Italian Commedia dell'Arte to the Brewers' Corporation Hall in Copenhagen. They gave a pantomime called *Harlequin Skeleton*, which is still popular to this day. A great crowd assembled to see this, even then, old comedy and all classes of people were so enchanted by what they saw that they forgot that they were huddled together regardless of age or position.

After the German company, other Commedia dell'Arte companies played in Denmark's capital with increasing success, until it even affected the administrators of the august Royal Theatre, who were forced to remove the comedies of Holberg from its repertoire. It was with no good grace that they allowed the masked players to appear on their boards, but the citizenry turned up in such numbers for the first performance in 1727 that the frown was wiped off the face of the administration owing to the cash which flowed into the box-office. They had reason to bless the advent of Harlequin and Pierrot because, for the next thirty-three years, whenever the Royal Theatre was in danger of closing down the situation was saved by bringing in the pantomimes. By 1760, however, the power of the pantomimes was on the wane, and apart from the appearance of Harlequin in ballets, plays or operas, he has not, except for one year in the early 19th century, held sway since.

ETERNAL TRIANGLE: Pierrot, Columbine and Harlequin in a scene from a typical pantomime as given in Tivoli.

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The later years of the 18th century in Denmark saw little pantomime. But in England this period marked the rise of the British pantomime, and it was an Englishman who revived the dying art and brought it back to the people of Copenhagen. James Price (the ancestor of a famous Danish theatrical family) gave some performances on what was known as the Jester's Stage in the Vesterbro district of Copenhagen; during the summer months he and his company appeared in the Deer Park at Klampenburg just outside the city. News of his success reached the ears of the King, who gave permission for Price's company to appear at the Royal Theatre in 1801. The success was short-lived because Price soon had a formidable rival in the Italian Casorti, who arrived with a large company and gave genuine pantomimes from Italy. The Englishman was banished from the Royal stage and the Italian took over. A year later Price and Casorti decided to merge their two companies and form the first permanent pantomime theatre in Copenhagen.

And permanent it has been because, in spite of various vicissitudes and change of theatre, many of those pantomimes created by Casorti and Price are still being given to this day. Thus the two schools of pantomime merged into the very definite art form which it is still possible to see. Possibly Copenhagen, with its great love of preserving the things that it cherishes, is the only city in the world where this is possible. In Rome, where the Commedia dell'Arte had reached great heights of popularity by the fourth century, the art is almost forgotten. Part of the reason for this may be due to the fact that Rome is susceptible to outside influences and new trends, situated as it is as one of the main junctions of the world. The geographical position of Denmark places it rather off the beaten track, or did until travel became so much easier. It was, therefore, a country much more likely to hold on to its old traditions and customs; new trends were unlikely to reach Denmark until several years later, if at all.

In the early 19th century the Italian comedy flourished as never before in Copenhagen, and the Danes loved Casorti's grotesque humour. In private life he was, as so many comedians are reputed to be, sulky and reserved, and there is a story about him which has often been quoted since in connection with other comedians, but it is most likely that this is the source of them all. Sometimes, it seems, depression got the better of Casorti and on one occasion it got so bad that he went to a doctor. This worthy gentleman told him that the best tonic for him would be to go to see Casorti as Pierrot because the comedian's antics would soon make him forget depression.

"If only I could follow your advice," Casorti replied.

"But why not?" asked the doctor; "surely you can afford the three marks that it costs?"

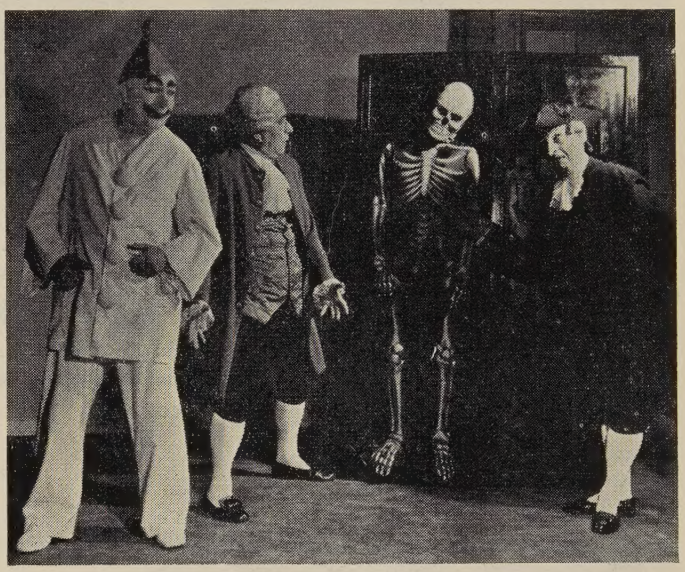
"That is not the reason," was the answer, "for I must tell you that I happen to be Casorti himself!"

The Italian comedian lived on until the eighteen-twenties and was succeeded by the sons of James Price, who had died in 1805. These sons, Adolf and James, were faced with serious competition in 1828 when a Mr. Levin was engaged by a rich person, who had built a theatre, to stage English pantomimes again. But the younger Prices were clever, and when Levin was away on tour, they married his two beautiful daughters—Rosa and Flora. This matrimonial link, added to the fact that Levin's theatre had been burnt down, brought the two families together in business. Their children were taken into the theatre as soon as was decent, and later some of them became pupils of the great Danish ballet master—August Bournonville.

When the pantomime theatre was built in Tivoli in 1843, the reign of the Prices, in connection with pantomime, finished. In 1843 the Tivoli director, Georg Carstensen, placed the theatre in the hands of Niels Henrik Volkersen, who later became a very famous Pierrot. When he died in 1894 he left a great tradition behind him, for during this period Tivoli and the Pantomime Theatre had become inextricably linked and that link is every bit as strong to the present day.

The many pantomimes in the present repertoire all last for half an hour. On the face of it they may appear rather childish to some people, but underneath the surface they contain a boundless truth and an extraordinary knowledge of human foibles. They are full of stage tricks and magical transformations such are seldom seen in the theatre of our time. The mime is broad and most eloquent, while much of the movement is pure ballet. Beneath the obvious entertainment value lies the basis of all theatre. As Niels Bjorn Larsen, formerly ballet master of the Royal Theatre and now at the Pantomime Theatre, says: "The old pantomimes possess a volume of wit and wisdom. The more one looks at them, the more respect one gets for this genuine branch of art. It calls for the greatest efforts from its performers. It is planned acting—all the time it is necessary to simplify—and that is just what art is."

Possibly this first tour of the Danish pantomime outside its own country will bring about a resurrection of the Commedia dell'Arte in other countries—it might even take it back to its home in Italy. **P.W.**



THE OLDEST COMEDY: The three pictures down the right-hand side of the page show Harlequin, Columbine and Pierrot in different pantomimes from the Tivoli Pantomime Theatre's repertoire to be shown in London.

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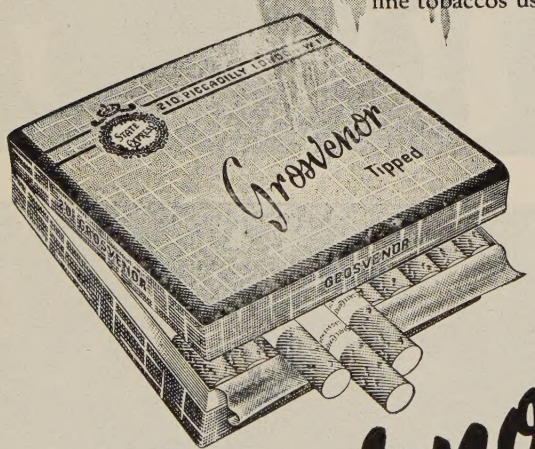

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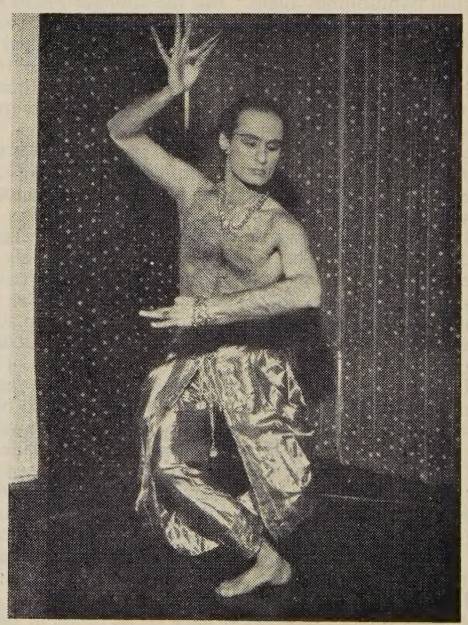

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THE LAND OF SNOW: Design by Alexandre Benois for the new Festival Ballet production of The Nutcracker *for which David Lichine and Benois are collaborating on the choreography and production.* *Photo: Mike Davis*

Ballet Perspectives: 2 — *The Nutcracker*

With a new full-length production of *The Nutcracker* for London's Festival Ballet at Christmas, the history of this classic from St. Petersburgh has a special interest.

by CLIVE BARNES

The old photographs are reproduced from Yuri Slonimsky's *Tchaikowsky and Ballet Theatre of His Time.*

TCHAIKOWSKY'S third and last great ballet score, *The Nutcracker*, owes its origins to that vitally important, yet frequently underestimated, architect of modern ballet, Ivan Alexandrovitch Vsevolojsky. Vsevolojsky became Director of the Imperial Theatres in St. Petersburgh in 1881, at the age of 46. He held that position until his retirement in 1899, and his reign produced, in the words of his chief ballet-master Marius Petipa, "a real blossoming forth of the arts in the St. Petersburgh theatres."

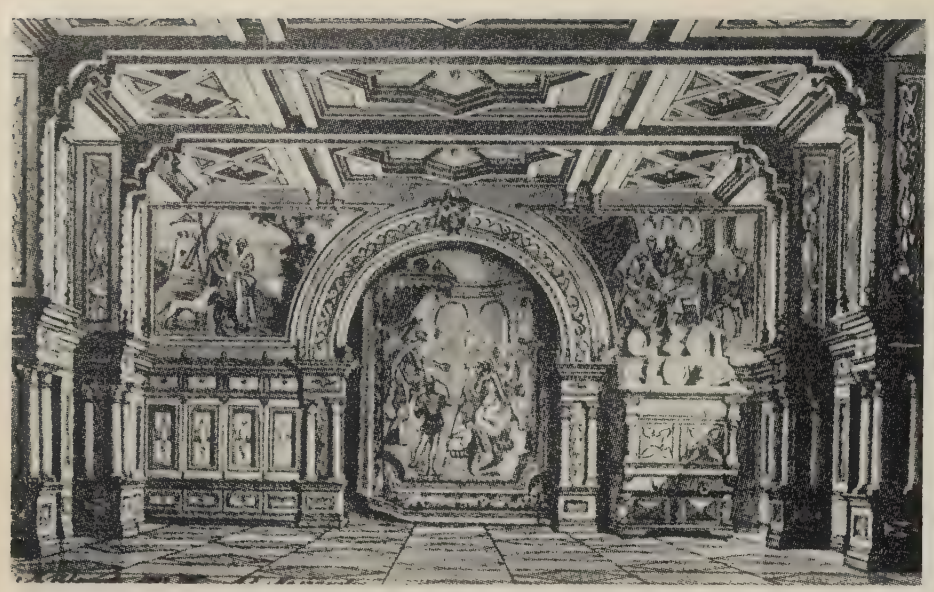
The position of Theatre Director was a court appointment, the official being directly responsible to the Czar. Vsevolojsky appears to have been a rich, aristocratic dilettante, with a genuine taste for the theatre—which provided a marked contrast with most of the men he succeeded—and a shrewd love of ballet, particularly of its more spectacular aspects. To some extent, although the parallel cannot be pushed too far, his approach to ballet had a little in common with the methods of Diaghilev. In manner and appearance he was a typical St. Petersburgh dandy, and the self-caricature he has left of himself (now in the Archives Internationales de la Danse) shows him with a hooked nose, drooping moustache, monocle and cigarette-holder, looking remarkably like Igor Stravinsky.

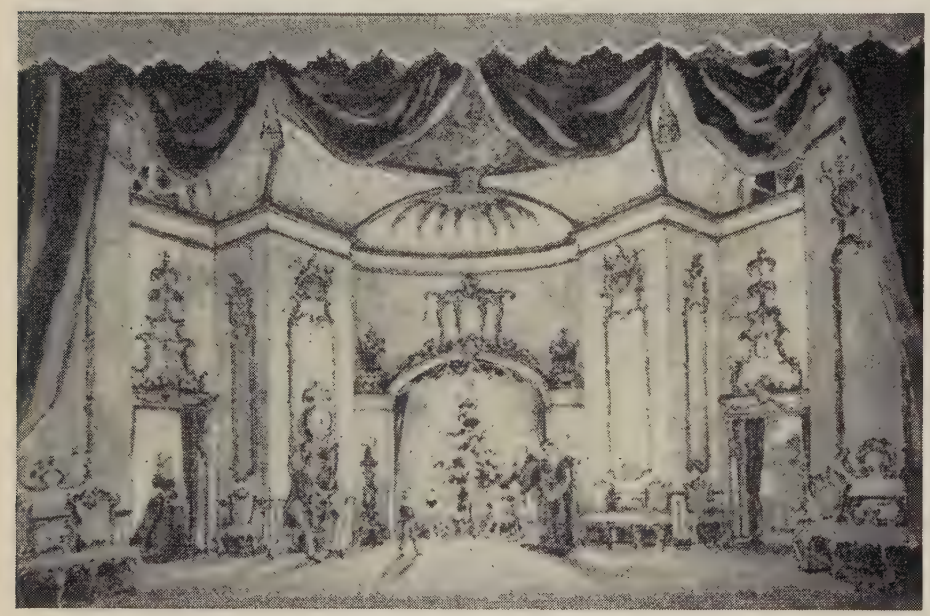
Marius Petipa had been virtual dictator of the Imperial Ballet for many years before Vsevolojsky appeared on the scene, and at first there appeared to be a good deal of mutual distrust between them. Petipa's conception of ballet-making he had inherited from his master Jules Perrot, and incorporated many of the ideals of Noverre. Gradually the ageing ballet-master came under the influence of the younger director, who conceived ballet primarily as an entertainment, and his own function as a rather superior master of ceremonies.

In his book *Nash Ballet*, written right at the end of the Vsevolojsky regime, the critic and historian Alexis Pleshcheef, pointed out: "Our choreography is living through a new epoch—the epoch of fairy-tales . . ." What Pleshcheef referred to as the "new spectacle" was certainly some way removed from the more realistic, Perrot-inspired works of the earlier Petipa. Yet curiously enough by largely abandoning his first ideals, Petipa created his masterpiece and Russian ballet, influenced strongly by the Italian school and rather less by the Franco-Danish, established itself as a great artistic force.

The ambiguous attitude towards this period which all impartial contemporary ballet historians are forced to adopt, results from the fact that despite its significance to the foundation of the Russian school and, indeed, all modern ballet, its technical advances in both choreography and dancing were achieved only at the expense of the basic nature of ballet. This period—vitally necessary to ballet—was at heart decadent and eventually prompted the revolutionary ardour of such reformers as Serge Volkonsky (Vsevolojsky's successor at the Maryinsky Theatre), Fokine, Benois and Diaghilev. Ironically, the aims of these advocates of the "new expressiveness" were close to the Noverrean principles Vsevolojsky persuaded Petipa to abandon—but art never develops along the simple straight lines beloved of historians.

One of Vsevolojsky's major achievements was the raising of the standard of the music used in ballet productions. For the greater part of the 19th century ballet music had been the ugly duckling of the musical world. Any hack composer was regarded as good enough to write it, as long as his tunes, mediocre and conventional though they might be, were regarded as "danceable." From 1871 the Viennese-born composer Ludwig Minkus had been "official composer to the ballet at the Maryinsky Theatre." While Minkus is today rather unfairly maligned, as he had a charm which modern critics too readily dismiss, he was far from being a great composer, and his dictatorship over ballet music was unfortunate. Vsevolojsky secured his retirement in 1886, and refused to fill the vacant post. It was in this way that the Director was able to commission Tchaikowsky in 1889 to write *The Sleeping Beauty*.





SCENE OF THE PARTY: Above, the setting for Scene I by M. I. Botcharov for the original 1892 *production at the Maryinsky Theatre. Below, the design by Benois for the same scene for the Festival Ballet production.* *Photo: Mike Davis*

This ballet, Petipa's acknowledged masterpiece, achieved a great public success. To such an extent that in the first year's season following its production nearly half of all the ballet performances given at the Maryinsky were devoted to the new ballet. Such a success had to have a sequel, and Vsevolojsky lost little time in commissioning another ballet from Tchaikowsky.

What made the director choose Dumas's story *Casse Noisette*, based on E. T. A. Hoffmann's fairy tale *Der Nussnacker und der Mauskönig*, is difficult to explain. It is far from being as attractive or suitable as the Perrault fairy stories for which Vsevolojsky obviously had so much affection. It seems that the most likely reason for the choice was the high regard in which Hoffmann was held—a regard that is reflected in the views of Benois—by the fashionable St. Petersburgh intelligentsia of the day.

Whatever intellectual society thought about Hoffman, Tchaikowsky was obviously not so entranced, and we find him writing petulantly about the "bourgeous" story.

Like the scenario for *The Sleeping Beauty*, that for *The Nutcracker* appears to have been the joint work of Vsevolojsky and Petipa, with the latter being responsible for working out the detailed action. Petipa had inherited from Perrot the Noverre conception that choreography was equal to music in importance, and had always worked in the closest collaboration with his composer. He was used to ordering music from Minkus as one might order suits from a tailor, and was almost unbelievably specific in his demands. When Tchaikowsky started work on *The Sleeping Beauty*, remembering miserably the unsuccessful staging of his first ballet *Swan Lake* (a work which was not a success until revised after the composer's death) he went to Petipa for guidance. Petipa responded by giving him the same type of tightly worded specification he was used to sending to Minkus. This had worked so well that composer and choreographer embarked on the same close collaboration on *The Nutcracker*.

Russian writer K. Waltz in his memoirs, has said that Tchaikowsky, "before composing the ballet *Swan Lake* had long been making efforts to find somebody who could give him accurate information about the music for dancing." Petipa's information was not only accurate, it was meticulous. Petipa worked out his ballets in incredible detail, and timed them to the last crochet. Many writers have suggested that poor Tchaikowsky's inspiration must have been ham-strung by his collaborator's peremptory demands, yet Yuri Slonimsky (in his important monograph *Marius Petipa*, translated by Anatole Chujoy) is clearly nearer the truth in wondering, "if Tchaikowsky would have been as successful with *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker* without Petipa's collaboration in the musical dramaturgy of the ballets."

Slonimsky quotes many of the actual notes Petipa sent to the composer, and since—amazingly—his monograph has not been published in this country, it may be interesting to reproduce a small passage (from Chujoy's translation published in 1947 by Dance Index), which gives some idea of the detail Petipa included. (The original source of these notes is the biography of Tchaikowsky by his brother Modeste.)

"The Christmas tree grows and becomes huge —48 measures fantastic music 'crescendo grandioso.' The guard challenges: 'Who goes there?' The mice do not answer—2 measures for the challenge, 2—for the silence. One or two measures for the fright (the shot), 8—for the awakening of the drummers, and 8—for the alarm. From 4 to 8—for the preparation for the battle. Entrance of the king of the rats—sharp, angry music the sounds of which split the ears . . . Clara throws her shoe—8 measures for a piercing scream and 6—for the whistling of the disappearing mice. The nutcracker is transformed into a prince—one or two chords.

"Here begins pathetic music which flows into a pathetic andante and ends majestically."

Petipa often went further in his demands, quite frequently ordering the orchestration. It would be quite normal for him to start work on the choreography before the music had been delivered. When the music was received he would work on it with the greatest care, sometimes changing his scenario and choreographic sketches, sometimes sending the music back to the composer for adjustment. He seems to have found Tchaikowsky entirely co-operative, much more so than Glazunov, of whom he subsequently complained bitterly because the composer would not "change a single note" in Legnani's *Raymonda* variation.

Tchaikowsky loved *The Sleeping Beauty*, but at first did not have his imagination fired by *The Nutcracker*. He appears to have received the commission for the score early in 1891, and before he left for a concert tour of America in March of the same year he had completed the draft sketches of the first act. The second act was sketched in on his return from America, and the complete preliminary draft was completed by June 1891. Unlike *The Sleeping Beauty* it was not intended to be a full-evening work—although it is today given in this form in Soviet Russia and now in England—and was being produced with the first performance of his one-act opera *Iolanthe*.

On June 25, 1891, Tchaikowsky wrote a famous letter to his nephew Vladimir Davidov, in which he described his new ballet as "infinitely worse than *The Sleeping Beauty*." This typically pessimistic judgment, written immediately after completing only the preliminary draft, has frequently been twisted into representing the composer's final opinion on the score.

The truth of the matter seems to be that although Tchaikowsky never evinced any great enthusiasm for the ballet's theme (who did

besides Vsevolojsky and the Benois group?), as he continued to work on the ballet he became more and more interested in its problems, particularly in its orchestration. On his way to America in the March he had become acquainted in Paris with Auguste Mustel's newly invented musical instrument the celesta. At once he decided to introduce the celesta in Russia, and went to some lengths to keep his plans secret, lest his thunder should be stolen and the celesta's "divinely beautiful tone" make its first appearance for Rimsky-Korsakov or Glazunov.

Tchaikowsky finished the score in the early spring of 1892, and quite inexplicably he immediately abstracted from it the famous suite and this was given its first performance at a concert by the Russian Music Society on March 19, 1892, some nine months *before* the production of the ballet. Presumably it was Tchaikowsky's anxiety to be first with his celesta that prompted his precipitate haste, yet how he persuaded Vsevolojsky to permit this course of action is hard to imagine.

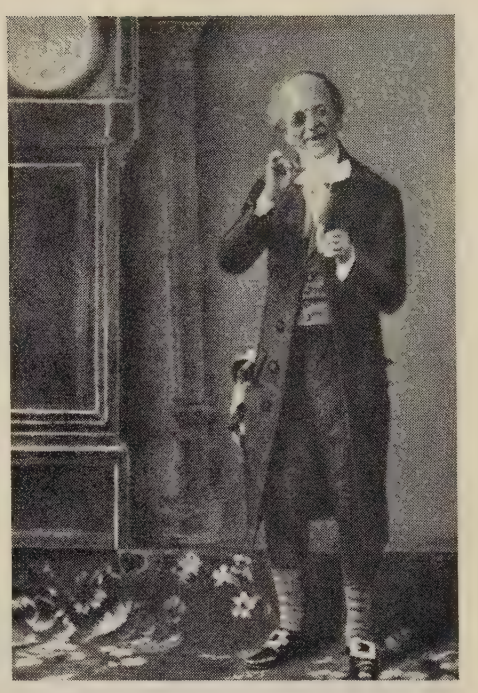
Rehearsals started for the ballet soon after the company reassembled in August for the winter season. They were started by Petipa, who was taken ill, and the ballet was completed by Petipa's assistant, Lev Ivanov, which leads to the considerable problem: "who choreographed *The Nutcracker*?" The posters for the ballet gave the name of Ivanov alone, and Cyril Beaumont in the *Complete Book*, and, of course, every subsequent Western authority, followed this and credited Ivanov with all the choreography. Yet by the same token, Beaumont (who corrects the natural slip in *The Ballet called Swan Lake*) and the others have stated that Ivanov was responsible for the ballet's scenario, which in the light of Petipa's notes to Tchaikowsky and other documentation, is obviously untrue. Ballet posters and programmes are often unreliable—look at Covent Garden's!

Ivanov, after a distinguished career as both dancer and teacher, had been appointed assistant to Petipa in 1885. The fashionable view of Ivanov today is that he was a choreographic genius, frustrated and held back by a mediocre and jealous Petipa. Supporters of this viewpoint—which like all the best lies has a lot of truth in it—have no hesitation in awarding the entire credit for *The Nutcracker* to Ivanov. Yet in this they are not only exaggerating both Ivanov's abilities and privations, but also doing an injustice to Petipa.

The opposite attitude is taken up by Serge Lifar, who in his *History of Russian Ballet* seeks to clear Petipa of the charge of holding back Ivanov, in the course of which defence he claims that Petipa composed a large part of *The Nutcracker*. Of course Lifar, although an excellent historian, typically but endearingly goes too far in his assertions; so often he is masterly at burying a ballet fallacy, and then detracts from the effect with a too triumphant dance on its grave.

In this instance, having marshalled the evidence in favour of Petipa—including a statement ascribed to Modeste Tchaikowsky,which I have not had the opportunity to verify, to the effect that "all the best items in *The Nutcracker* had been thought out by Petipa"—he goes on attacking the luckless Ivanov with the bitterness most historians reserve for Petipa, eventually allowing to the Russian only "a certain individuality" and finally casting random seeds of doubt on his share in *Swan Lake*, muttering darkly that Ivanov's name had been "linked" with the choreography of the white acts, but that, "Petipa seems to have more than one finger in the pie."

The truth, I imagine, lies between these two poles of opinion. That Ivanov was a choreo-



DR. DROSSELMEYER: Mike Davis's photograph on the left shows Benois' new design for this character. Right, Dr. Drosselmeyer as he appeared in the 1892 *production.*

SNOWFLAKES: Left, Benois' new design for the Snowflake Fairies in the Land of Snow for the Festival Ballet production. Right, as these ladies appeared in the original 1892 *production. It will be seen that there is a great similarity between the costumes in both productions.*

grapher of immense talent no one considering *Swan Lake* can doubt, but on the whole his treatment at the hands of his senior seems to have been far from unfair. Similarly as the score for *The Nutcracker* was completed in the March of 1892, it seems most likely from internal evidence and sheer probability that this at least was a pie in which Petipa really did seem to have more than one finger.

The outline of the choreography is obviously Petipa's, and very probably quite a number of the dances and ensembles had been roughed out before Petipa's illness and only required his assistant's polishing. However, the wonderful *ballabile* of snowflakes, probably the finest portion of the ballet, would clearly seem to have more affinity with the hand that created the second act of *Swan Lake* than with, for example, Petipa's Vision Scene in *The Sleeping Beauty*. It consequently appears fair to consider the scenario of *The Nutcracker* to be the joint production of Petipa and Vsevolojsky, and the choreography to have been the shared responsibility of Petipa and Ivanov, with the latter taking the lion's share of the glory.

Unfortunately, at the first performance on December 18, 1892, there was precious little glory to share. In his *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet*, Alexandre Benois quotes a diary extract made after the first night: ". . . But alas! *Casse-Noisette* has not turned out a success! And it was just in this ballet that I had placed all my hopes, knowing Tchaikowsky's talent for creating a fairy-tale atmosphere. But perhaps the chief cause of my disappointment lies not in the music but in the *hideous* production." Benois continued by attacking in turn the *décors* of K. M. Ivanov (Act 1) and M. I. Botcharov (Act 2), calling the latter, by some slip of the pen, Levogt, who had collaborated with Botcharov on the designs for *The Sleeping Beauty*. The production is attacked at length and in detail, while the choreography and dancers are not even mentioned.

MADAME REGNIER AND THE TWO POLCHINELLES: Above, Benois' designs for these three characters from the last act for the Festival Ballet production. Left, as they appeared in the original 1892 production. These characters have been omitted from most productions in Western Europe though Balanchine used them in his production for New York City Ballet.

Although this was in no way a repetition of the disastrous Reisinger *Swan Lake*, it was not a success like *The Sleeping Beauty*. At the first performance the part of the Sugar Plum Fairy was danced by one of the Maryinsky's three Italian ballerinas, Antoinietta dell'Era, and although Beaumont describes her performance as being "brilliantly rendered," it did not appear to find general favour. For the second performance of the ballet she was replaced by a Russian dancer, A. F. Nikitina, a popular pupil of Ivanov's, for whom Petipa had produced *Coppélia* eight years previously. Both ballerinas were partnered by Paul Gerdt.

Although *The Nutcracker* has never played the large part in the ballet repertory taken by the other two Tchaikowsky classics, it has, almost entirely by virtue of its score, maintained its place in the ballet theatre. The original Petipa/Ivanov version is now, I imagine, more or less completely extinct, even though there remains the very faint possibility that the Royal Ballet might rehash and refurbish the old Sergueeff revival of the original choreography. Failing this, except in isolated fragments of somewhat dubious authenticity, the 1892 production can be regarded as dead or deader as Saint-Léon's original *Coppélia*. In Western Europe, at least, the ballet has been a kind of sleeping beauty awaiting the revivifying kiss of some choreographer-prince.

In Russia the ballet has either enjoyed or endured a number of productions, notably one by Alexander Gorsky, some of them coming almost indecently close on the heels of the Petipa/Ivanov original. The first important Soviet production was by Fedor Lopukhov, with décor by Dmitriev. Lopukhov's choreography was described as being in "the Formalist style" (whatever that may mean), but it was not successful, and in talking of another production

the Soviet critic V. Bogdanov-Beresovsky states sinisterly that: "The ballet had been discredited as the result of Lopukhov's and Dmitriev's 'interpretation'."

The next important Soviet production took place in 1934, with scenario and choreography by Vasily Vainonen and scenery by, I believe, the same Dmitriev, whose "interpretation" previously incurred displeasure. The basic disadvantage of the original version was the poor opportunity it gave to its ballerina, and this coupled with the puerility of its story could not but prove fatal. Vainonen seems to have tackled the problem by transforming "Little Clara" into Masha, a young adolescent, and giving her a real prince to dance with.

In the original version Clara intervenes between the Nutcracker Prince and the King of the Mice, whereupon the Prince in gratitude takes her through the Land of Snow to the Kingdom of the Sweets, where she is rewarded with a few character dancers and the Sugar Plum Fairy dancing in a *pas de deux*. In Vainonen's version I understand that the Nutcracker Prince has been omitted. Three toys are presented in the first act, a ballerina doll, a jack-in-the-box and a golliwog—in last month's DANCE AND DANCERS, Michael Kullman, who saw Vainonen's production danced by students in Moscow, drew attention to the similarity in choreographic conception between these three dolls and the principals in Fokine's *Petrushka*. Masha chooses the golliwog as her favourite, and it is he who she saves from the King of the Mice. The golliwog is transformed into a handsome prince who takes her on a journey to his Kingdom of the Sweets, where they dance the famous *pas de deux* together, with no Sugar Plum Fairy to distract them.

The rôle of Masha was originally danced by Ulanova, but later it became a famous part in the repertory of Maya Plisetskaya. The last act *pas de deux* from Vainonen's version has been danced in London by Nina Chistova and Boris Khokhlov, when it could be seen as a charming piece of choreography owing nothing to Ivanov, but well in accord with the music.

The first appearance in Western Europe of any excerpt from *The Nutcracker*—the concert suite was, needless to say, well known—came at the *répétition générale* of Diaghilev's first programme on May 18, 1909, in Paris. It was the Bouffon dance from the last act, danced by Rozay, but in a version by Fokine. In 1921 Diaghilev introduced versions by Nijinska of the *Danse Arabe* and *Danse Chinoise* into his company's production of *The Sleeping Beauty*. Also in the same production the Lilac Fairy danced the Sugar Plum Fairy variation in the Prologue—this was the standard version and was probably the first appearance of Ivanov's *Nutcracker* choreography in Western Europe.

One of the first full productions in Western Europe, certainly the first production of the Petipa/Ivanov choreography, was Sergueeff's revival of the work for the Royal Ballet on January 30, 1934. The designer was Hedley Briggs, and the principal rôles were first taken by Alicia Markova and Stanley Judson. In subsequent performances both Anton Dolin and Harold Turner appeared as the cavalier, and Ruth French danced the Sugar Plum Fairy. This, Sergueeff's third classical revival for the company and the first of the full-length Tchaikowsky ballets to enter the repertory, was rather shoddily given, and proved only popular for the sake of Markova. Sergueeff included most of the original choreography, suitably amended to the size and scope of the company, the most notable omission being the dance of Madame Regnier and her Polchinelles in the last act.

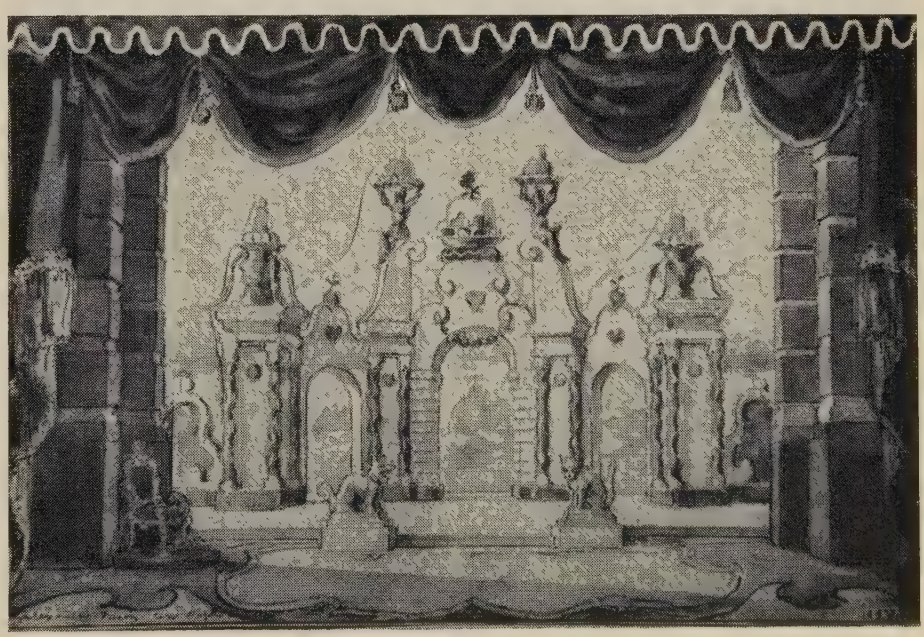
This production, very slightly revised, was remounted by the company on January 8, 1937, when it was given new décor and costumes by Mstislav Dobujinsky. The principal dancers on that occasion were Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann. Sometimes the second act was given separately, and the work remained in the Royal Ballet repertory until well into the war years. On April 8, 1946, the second act of this production was taken into the repertory of the cadet branch of the Royal Ballet at its inaugural performance. The principal rôles were taken by guest artists, Margaret Dale and Norman Thomson. Later Anne Heaton, Nadia Nerina and Elaine Fifield all appeared as the Sugar Plum Fairy.

On September 11, 1951, the same company, immediately prior to their North American tour, produced an entirely new version of the ballet in two scenes, with choreography freely based on Ivanov by Frederick Ashton, and scenery and costumes by Cecil Beaton. This production jettisoned the Children's Party of the Prologue, and opened in the Kingdom of Snow, with a transformation scene into the Kingdom of Sweets. All the narrative element had been omitted, and a ballerina and *premier danseur* added to the snow scene. Ashton's choreography proved original, felicitous, exciting and so effectively sabotaged by Cecil Beaton's designs that it only lasted one season. It was, however, by far the most satisfying version of the ballet yet produced in England. The principal dancers were Svetlana Beriosova, Elaine Fifield, Robert Lunnon and David Blair.

Other Western choreographers have also attempted to bring the ballet to life. In many ways one of the most important of these productions historically was that given by the René Blum company in 1936, with choreography by Boris Romanov and designs by Alexieff (a *nom de guerre* for William Chappell). This production made no attempt to reproduce the Maryinsky original, but tried to extend the range of the ballerina's rôle while still keeping to Petipa's scenario. Among other changes, Dr. Drosselmeyer was given more importance, and the character dances in the last act were rejected in favour of a series of classical *enchaînements*, but of most significance was the introduction of a ballerina Snow Queen into the Snowflakes scene. The principal dancer was Vera Nemtchinova.

A Snow Queen also appears in the old version of the ballet produced by London's Festival Ballet. This production, first given on October 24, 1950, originally had décor and

(*continued on page* 42)



THE KINGDOM OF SWEETS: Above, Botcharov's setting for the last act for the original 1892 *production. Below, Benois' design for this scene for the Festival Ballet production.*

Photo: Mike Davis

Ballet Rambert in the Celestial City

by FREDERICK BROMWICH

Notes taken by Ballet Rambert's manager during the journey to Peking and during the company's stay in China's capital.

COPPELIA *IN PEKING: Marie Rambert (centre in black) with Chou-en-Lai (the Prime Minister) after the first performance of* Coppélia *in Peking. Also in this on-stage group can be seen Lucette Aldous, Norman Morrice, Ann Horn, Ian Metsis, Patricia Ashworth and Gillian Martlew.*

The road to Peking

ARRIVING at Prague, a small one-storey airport, we were informed quite casually that there was no jet today (the company had been booked on this). We could not find out why but were told that the jet from Moscow would wait for us. While waiting for some form of transport we were taken to see a film. The first words we heard were in English and the film turned out to be about the workings of Sabena Air Lines with an English commentary.

At last we left on a Russian plane like an old Dakota. Our Russian air-hostess was very pretty, with a well-cut uniform and pleasantly made up. She spoke good English and was most sympathetic. We talked to her of plays and films and found out that she liked Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh. She said that Russian films were not good at the moment, and that she liked French and Italian films most. She was also interested in fashion, and had been to the British fashion show in Moscow a few years ago.

We had been split into two parties and met up at Moscow airport at 1.30 a.m. Here again the staff is ridiculously small for tourist passengers. There is one girl whose job it is to write down laboriously one's name and flight number in a book. You are then passed on to two girls who handle your ticket. The baggage department is even smaller with two porters and one woman. We had to help give them a hand to carry our 39 pieces, but this was done with the best of humour.

However, after this we were blandly told the plane had left for Peking, and after all, we were late, were we not! Mercifully they had 22 seats on an ordinary plane, which left in a few minutes. Mad rush and all the luggage put on the plane, and four of us were left behind to wave goodbye. (The party consisted of 26 at this point.) We asked where we could spend the night and were told on chairs. I rang the British Embassy and a well-spoken voice said, "What a bad show," but did not know how to help. I suggested that they might have beds there, or even a comfortable settee, but the voice said, "Aren't there any easy chairs at the Airport?" so I rang off. In the meantime a very friendly interpreter found some rooms in an Interpol Hotel and coupons for food, which was plentiful and pleasant. In the morning we went back to the airport and were told that maybe we would fly that night, so the only thing to do was to catch a bus and look round Moscow.

The first thing that you see coming into the city is the colossal flats being built—literally dozens of them, eight stories high, plain but quite pleasant. Next we saw the university, which is an elegant building with a lovely central tower. The main streets are very wide and clean, but the traffic is half that of any town I have ever seen, and all the cars are the same. We walked into the Red Square, backed by the Kremlin which seemed massive, the onion-domes being very colourful.

We went to GYM, the big store, and were impressed with its size. There are little shops on two floors, the centre being open to the sky and covered with glass. The shops on the upper floors are joined by stone bridges, and it all looked fine except for the clothes. How drab they all are, not one pretty dress or well-cut man's suit! The ladies' underclothes were of our grandmothers' time. The whole place was full of people buying.

Outside crowds were being shown around the Lenin tomb, and we watched the changing of the guard. Once in position the soldiers stand as if cut from granite without a single movement. It was very hot. We passed the Bolshoi, but it was closed. We bought ice-cream, which was not bad but expensive. Down to see the Metro, very impressive, though the large heroic statues were a little overwhelming. It was crowded on the escalators, and the trains were very smart and bright.

Back at the Airport, we were told to return at 10, as they may have news for us then.

After using our last meal coupons on a very good dinner, we were told that there may be two seats only at 10.30. In the waiting-room the television was still showing *Anna Karenina*, the earlier parts we had seen at the hotel two hours earlier. The picture was quite good, and the whole production B.B.C. 1946 vintage. After the play there was a crooner complete with a Latin-American band. At 11 p.m. Madame Rambert arrives from Leningrad and takes the 11.40 plane to Peking. Eventually we get two seats, but the others have to travel the next day.

Flowers for all

AFTER a bumpy journey over the Gobi desert, we arrived in blazing hot sun. As we left the plane twenty lovely young girls from the Classical Theatre School rushed to us with flowers, everyone had a bouquet, men included, and we were whisked off to a really first-class hotel (each room with a private bath) and fed Western style.

The theatre, comparatively new, was pleasant with a very good stage and good lighting. Our scenery, made and painted in their workshop from our models, was excellent though the oriental influence crept in occasionally; in *Giselle* the castle had a slight "pagoda" look.

At first it was strange not to have applause after a *pas de deux* on the opening night, but our people rather liked it. At the end we took ten curtains and the deputy Prime Minister came on the stage and congratulated everyone of the company; then a storm of girls appeared with flowers for everyone. It was a memorable night.

We were taken the next day round part of the city and shown all the new schools and colleges being built. Our interpreters were naturally keen to impress us with what the government was doing for the people, and were rather earnest about it all, but one must say we saw nothing but smiling faces, and happy lively children, even amongst the poorest.

The orchestra, the first Western-playing orchestra run by the city, is extremely good and will be excellent later on. They are all very keen and, in breaks for the inevitable tea, stay to practise bits they are not sure of.

We were given a banquet by the President of the Chinese Association for Cultural Relations in the Peking Hotel, an enormous hotel just opened. Here we had a real Chinese meal, which was delicious and we all used chop-sticks, some more successfully than others. At the banquet, the British Chargé d'Affaires and the British Minister were present. Madame Rambert was toasted and everything went with a swing. They loved *Giselle* and seemed to enjoy *Gala Performance*. Ann Horn made a hit with the audience and had hundreds of pictures taken. The price of the seats were the highest ever charged, one yen fifty (about 3/–) downwards, and people queued for four days to get them. The whole of our twelve performances in Peking were sold out.

The Company had great fun travelling in Pedi-cars and marvelled at the strength of the men who rode them, going miles at quite a good speed. We walked down little streets, on each side of which were shops and people doing

metal and wood work, making clothes, hats and all open to the public eye. There are little houses just behind, each with their own tiny courtyard, and children everywhere. I only saw two emaciated people while there, though in many places their homes and conditions were very primitive. Many flats were going up, but how long it will take to house a population of 4,000,000 who mostly live in this poor state, one does not know. The dust is one of the most trying things for a foreigner. At times it chokes you, and we all had colds.

We went into the country one day and saw the most adorable children with their teacher, who were very excited by the sight of white faces and light hair. Nearby women were washing clothes in a stream, beating them with a stick on stone. They were quite unconcerned when we took pictures of them.

One evening, after *Coppélia*, we were received on the stage by Chou-en-Lai, the Prime Minister. He shook hands with all the company and told Ann Horn he was sorry he did not see her in *Giselle*, but he was so busy. He is a very quietly spoken man and, they say, works at tremendous speed and keeps four secretaries going at once.

Before this we had been taken to the Temple of Heaven, two separate temples about a quarter of a mile apart, which were only opened three times a year. Hundreds of soldiers were rehearsing their parade for October 1, Liberation Day, and some of their marching was of a "Guards" rarity, with wonderful body and muscle control. They asked us not to take photographs until Liberation Day, otherwise there was no restriction on either photographing or on our movements.

The Peking audience seemed to like *Coppélia* and started to clap various solos. Our young orchestra settled down and played well, and became very keen. They told David Ellenberg that in a few years time they would be ready to ask him to come to conduct an orchestral concert with them.

Our four interpreters were marvellous, the slightest wish was noted and carried out. They were charming, good tempered and easy to talk to, even about Communism.

On our first day off we went to the Summer Palace in the hills. With us were some of the Folk dance students, who were charming and very pretty. It is a beautiful place, with lovely courtyards, buildings and temples—very impressive. On one of the stages, the Folk dancers gave a short recital. They were excellent and, not to be outdone, John Chesworth and Ann Horn danced the Tango from *Façade* against a Chinese background.

After a splendid lunch the Company went on the river in a fearsome-looking boat beautifully got-up as a dragon with large fangs, head and tail, and about eight feet high. In the evening we went to the Peking Opera, in a new theatre about two miles out of the city. It held 1,700 people and was packed. The costumes and mime were good, and we understood all that went on, particularly the comedy. The singing we found monotonous and did not understand when the audience broke into applause after a particular piece had been emitted by a singer. It was, of course, like an opera singer in the West, who reaches top C and holds it, but it did not come across to us. In two of the operas the leading lady was played by a man in the most delicate and refined way. It was a really beautiful performance. Afterwards we met some of the leading actors and found them completely natural, with quite masculine hands, which on the stage looked like porcelain.

NEXT MONTH: More about Ballet Rambert's tour of China including an assessment of Chinese reaction to various ballets and a portfolio of pictures by John Chesworth.

KOREANS AT THE SUMMER PALACE: Ballet Rambert and their Chinese friends being entertained by a Korean Dance given by members of the Peking Folk Dance Ensemble.

IN THE FORBIDDEN CITY: (below) Ballet Rambert and their Chinese friends in front of one of the many beautiful pavilions in Peking's Forbidden City.

ULANOVA TALKS!

The great Bolshoi ballerina gives an exclusive interview, during the World Youth Festival in Moscow, to SUSHIL ISHWARDAS

MOST visitors to the World Youth Festival were obsessed with a desire to see Ulanova perform at the Bolshoi. The Theatre and Ulanova sound analagous, which is hardly surprising for a precious part of her lifetime as a ballerina has been devoted to the Bolshoi. Although she often performed for the benefit of the Festival delegates, Ulanova remained completely elusive to the hunting journalists. My earlier efforts at contacting her, during my stay in Moscow proved very disappointing.

The Festival was drawing to its close, and I had given up all hope when a chance meeting with one of the Bolshoi dancers removed my anxiety. He arranged a meeting, and I found myself invited to visit her on the following day. The interview was to take place at the Bolshoi, during her rehearsal time. I was shown into her spacious studio, a pleasant room with yellow wallpaper and lace curtains. The double set of windows look out on Sverdlov Square. The furniture is agreeable without being striking. The room has a peaceful quality about it, in spite of being above Moscow's noisiest square. The room had a generous supply of fresh flowers in it.

The interpreter who had been detailed to cover the conversation arrived, followed by Ulanova herself. I must confess I was a little taken aback. She was dressed very simply, with a floral skirt and a plain white woollen jerkin thrown over her shoulders. What struck me was the complete absence of rouge or lipstick. She had her hair neatly tied with a ribbon at the back of her head. Her general appearance emphasised her refreshing naturalness, a quality shared by most Soviet women.

Ulanova was very cordial and enquired if I wanted to have a "voda frutkava" (Russian mineral water). She allowed photographs to be taken inside her studio, quite an honour as none have previously appeared in the Press. While talking, she gesticulated a great deal with her hands. I greatly regretted that I could not speak any Russian. She speaks some French, however, and occasionally we managed to "get across" to one another. While answering questions she smiled from time to time, making interesting quips in Russian.

Question: *Would you like to tell me something about your early years—about your first lessons in ballet and the reasons that prompted you to take up this profession?*

Answer: I spent the early years in Leningrad. Actually I could not tell you whether I was inspired to go in for ballet, or whether the idea came from my family. My mother, Maria Romanova, a teacher of the classical dance, had a considerable influence over me, and it was largely through her personal coaching and unflagging enthusiasm that I was initiated into the classical dance. Later on I joined the Vaganova School in Leningrad, where I learned the finishing touches. I think I must have been about 9 when I joined. I have been dancing professionally for 28 years now.

Q.: *In your opinion, what are the qualities necessary to make a beginning in ballet? What would you look for in a child who is interested in taking up ballet?*

A.: I do think that a capacity for hard work is essential and, of course, a certain amount of talent. Our writer Gorky has defined talent as hard work. I agree with him. Environment also helps, especially in the early years. In my own case, I disciplined my body to intense hours of practice. Earlier on I practised for eight hours a day, though I am afraid I can no longer maintain that nowadays.

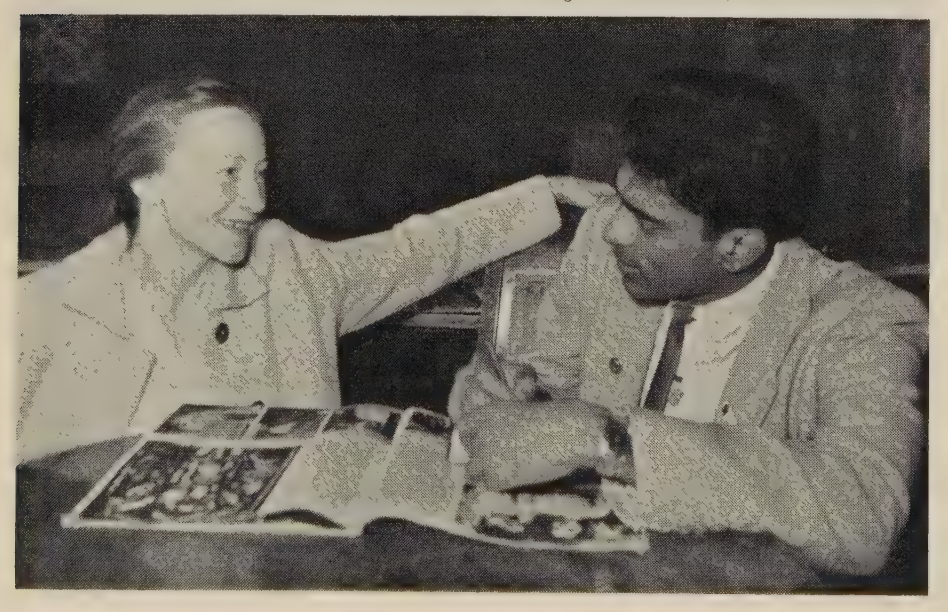
Q.: *Russia, I would say, seems to hold the monopoly of the best dancers. Do you agree?*

A.: You surprise me. We do have a good number of top class artists, but I would not like to use the word monopoly. The classical dance in this country goes back 250 years. It has borrowed from the other schools, mainly the Italian. I think the reasons why we have attained a certain degree of perfection can be traced to the careful choice of the right traditions and the correct manner of their development. In short, we have very deep roots.

Q.: *Your folk-dancers are rightly renowned. Would you say that there are definite links between folk-dancing and the classical dance?*

A.: No. I do not agree with dance historians who say that there are links. After all, folk-dancing is a primitive, natural expression, while the classical dance is something infinitely more subtle, and without doubt artificial. I am adamant that the two should not mix, insofar as the purifying and perfecting of one's art is concerned.

ULANOVA with Sushil Ishwardas during the above interview.



Q.: *I take it then that you have never done any folk-dancing?*

A.: No! never. Furthermore I would not advise anyone to take it up—that is if they wish to become good classical dancers.

Q.: *This question reminds me a little of Pavlova and Isodora Duncan. I remember that Isodora has been acknowledged as having lifted folk-dancing out of its rut.*

A.: In the case of Isadora Duncan, I would not say that she received any inspiration from folk-dance; rather I feel that she was a creative genius who evolved her own technique independent of folklore. Pavlova, on the other hand, was an established classical dancer. Yet she did experiment in Chinese and Hindu dancing. But that can hardly be called an essay into folk-dancing. Both dancers had a considerable influence on the art of their time.

Q.: *You mentioned Hindu dancing. Have you any opinions on it? Have you met any Indian artists?*

A.: I am very anxious to learn more about the Indian dance. Although I have the utmost respect for it, it is clearly beyond my grasp. From time to time I have met Indian dancers. Ram Gopal I met in London. Some of them have explained to me the significance of the movements. I feel in time I shall be able to understand the Hindu dance.

Q.: *While in London you must have seen some English Ballet. What did you think of it?*

A.: I did not have the opportunity of seeing many performances. My health was giving me some trouble and I remained most of the time confined to my apartment. I do feel, however, that they have some brilliant dancers. There is a strong tendency to modernise the classical dance, which is a very encouraging sign. I am looking forward to visiting England again.

Q.: *Talking about travel, have you any intention to visit the United States?*

A.: At the moment I do not have any specific plans, but if the situation improves I should very much like to visit the United States.

Q.. *I suppose you are fond of travelling. Have you any favourite spots here in the USSR?*

A.: My usual hideout is the Valdoy near Leningrad. I go there when I am in need of a rest, but another part to which I am very attached is the Crimea. I always spend some months there when I am recovering from overstrain. I have travelled all over the USSR.

Q.: *I have heard that you do a lot of social work. What exactly are your other activities?*

A.: Yes, I am very busy. These days I am one of the judges for the Festival competitions. I am a member of the Bolshoi Theatre Arts Group, and I work on the advisory committee of the repertory theatres in Russia.

Q.: *Do you ever find time to indulge in the other arts?*

A.: You mean the classical arts? Well, yes. I do enjoy music. I have a preference for Tchaikovsky and Glinka. I am fond of paintings too. I especially admire the works of Rubens. Also Botticelli, as he inspires me in a particular way. I find it helps me to study his works, especially when I was working on *Romeo and Juliet*. I also play the piano, although it is a long time since I ran my fingers over the keys.

A bell rang. "You must hurry," she said.

Q.: *Have you any future works in mind?*

A.: I have a number of things which I plan to do. The main setback is lack of time. I am eager to set to work on *Joan of Arc*.

"Will you be coming to India?" I asked finally.

"I want very much to see India," she said, getting up and putting back her chair.

"I like your flowers," I said when we were leaving the room. "Thank you. They come from all over Russia." We had reached the bottom of the stairs. Ulanova turned, shaking my hand. "Come back to Moscow," she said. The door closed.

Summer's last festival

Music and dancing at the Fourth International Festival of Seville

by PETER WILLIAMS

THE strange thing about Seville is that all the happenings in Prosper Mérimée's *Carmen* or Beaumarchais' *Marriage of Figaro* could take place today and nobody would be in the least surprised—gypsies, smugglers, matadors (not "toreadors," please!), intriguing bourgeoisie and aristocrats are still there. The gypsy quarter of Triana is not as colourful as writers and composers would have us imagine, nor is the Guadilquivir, with its traffic of commerce, quite the romantic river that Russian poets used to picture in their nostalgic poems. Otherwise it is a city of great beauty which changes its face with the sun's progress across the heavens. The sacred and the profane are jumbled together into a brightly coloured jig-saw puzzle which somehow achieves the unity of a Persian carpet. Watching over it all is the mighty Giralda tower sounding the angelus where once, during Moorish occupation, the muezzin called the faithful to prayer.

In this city, enjoying mid-summer temperature at a time when London is blinking at the first autumn fogs, the last of the major summer festivals takes place. This year's attractions included Antonio's company, the Symphony Orchestra of Valencia with conductor José Iturbi and soloists Jean Madeira and Alicia de Larrocha, the Ballet of the Opera from Amsterdam with stars from the Paris Opéra, Songs and Dances of Andalucia, Compania Lope de Vega in various plays including Shakespeare's *Othello*, Arthur Miller's *The Witches of Salem* and Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. Unfortunately, owing to the length of the festival (September 19 to October 6) I was not able to see all that was offered. I missed Antonio's company, but as he gave virtually the same programme that I saw, and wrote about, during his last London season this was a none too serious omission.

Within a few moments of my arrival on September 25, I was whisked off to a concert in the Patio de la Monteria, one of the many magnificent Moorish courtyards in the Alcazar. It was as difficult to get adjusted to the tropical warmth of the night, with cicadas providing a merry contrapuntal accompaniment to the orchestra, as it was to feel at home with Wagner, Brahms and Rachmaninov in this oriental setting with its secret vistas and the heady scent of warm-climate flowers floodlit against a dense star-crammed sky. Nor, somehow, did the jovial Iturbi, smoking a pipe in a tail-coat and white tie during the intervals, seem for the moment to fit into the picture. However, after a time new sensations become old friends and incongruity becomes the natural order of the day—or night—and it was then possible to judge the music for what it was worth. The Valencia orchestra is large and its string section very good, although the brass section, unfortunately, was rather rough and upset the balance. Iturbi did not strike me as being an inspired conductor but competent and mechanical, and Brahms's First Symphony did not achieve its essential impact on this account. Alicia de Larrocha, the soloist in the Rachmaninov Second Piano Concerto, pulled both orchestra and conductor together in a sensitive and spirited performance of a concerto I should be very happy never to hear again. But it was the ancient walls of the Alcazar who were the real stars of the evening, and it seemed that they would have been happier echoing Manuel de Falla, Albeniz and, oddly enough, Mozart or Scarlatti.

The scourge from Asia

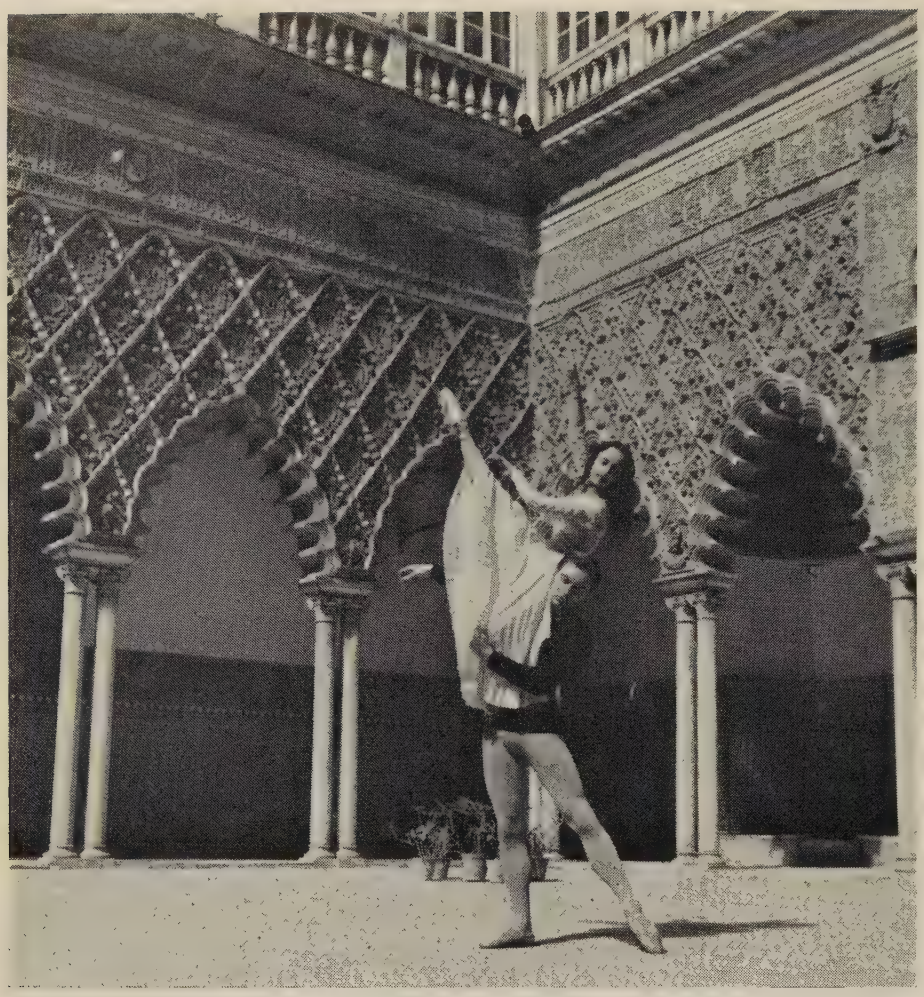
The ballet performances returned to the festival in the Maria Luisa Park on September 27. A temporary open-air theatre, seating about 4,000 people is surrounded by large palm trees whose silhouettes form the principal setting and give everything an exotic appearance. The complications of a Northern European autumn had already beset the poor Amsterdam Opera Ballet because they arrived with their numbers severely curtailed owing to Asian 'flu. The wretched germ seemed to thrive in the hot climate of southern Spain, and before two performances were out twelve more dancers succumbed.

The result was a number of chaotic performances with many dancers taking over rôles hitherto unknown to them. The *corps de ballet* was disastrously depleted and its unity was impaired by people finding themselves in unrehearsed positions as casualties occurred even during performances, though not actually on stage. This resulted in programmes sometimes being changed a few minutes before the performance, and the audience was often at a loss to know just what it was seeing even though the items were announced through loudspeakers. All of which makes it impossible to pass fair judgment on the company.

DON QUIXOTE *IN THE GARDENS: Peter Van Dijk and Claude Bessy, stars of the Paris Opéra, in one of the many beautiful walled gardens of Seville's Alcazar.* *Photo: Serge Lido*

Mercifully the oriental bug did not affect the dancers from the Paris Opéra—anyway, not while they were in Seville, though what happened afterwards I never heard. Peter Van Dijk and Claude Bessy first appeared in the *Don Quixote pas de deux* and it did not have quite its accustomed sparkle, mainly due, I learned afterwards, to some loose boards in the stage. Van Dijk showed his usual classical and clean schooling, but Bessy was a little unsure of herself. She is so essentially a dancer with a beautiful line that I am not certain whether a *pas de deux* needing great bravura and, in the best sense, a certain vulgarity is entirely for her. The fact that she is tall and blonde does not seem quite right, though perhaps we are stupid to have the preconceived notion that the female partner should be dark.

They were followed by Liane Daydé as Odette in the second act of *Swan Lake*, partnered also by Van Dijk. The same remarks that I recently made about Daydé in the *Black Swan pas de deux* at the Nervi festival apply again. Like so many French dancers she has



MAURESQUE TRAGEDY OF VERONA: Liane Daydé and Peter Van Dijk in Lifar's version of the Tchaikovsky Romeo and Juliet *in the Patio de la Monteria which is one of the many Moorish courtyards of the Alcazar in Seville.* *Photo: Serge Lido*

not yet grasped the true nobility of the Russian masters. She danced very well and precisely, she is a fine technician on a rather miniature scale, but somehow she was more a sparrow than a swan—a hurried flutter where a majestic flapping was needed. If, as is reported, Daydé is to appear at the Bolshoi as a guest ballerina, she will see just what I mean if she watches any one of the Odettes in the Moscow company. In his variation, Peter Van Dijk scored the great hit of the evening, and warmed up the Sevillian audience which even that city's famous son—Antonio—has accused of being one of the most frigid in the world. The *corps de ballet* went through some movements entirely unknown to me in this ballet, and I cannot think that Asian 'flu was entirely to blame. My programme informed me that the choreography was by Françoise Adret with no mention of Ivanov, with whose choreography for the St. Petersburg production nobody has quarrelled—so why change it for something inferior and, at moments, unmusical?

These two works were sandwiched between three creations by Françoise Adret: *The Dream of Veronica* (to Khatchaturian music), *Clara* (to Alphonse Dtepenbrock music) and *Four Movements* (to Haydn's Symphony No. 88). Apart from some charming costumes by Dimitri Bouchine, the first was a muddled dream of a child who would have benefited by a turn on the psycho-analyst's couch. *Clara* was an energetic Romantic Gothic *pas de deux* for Adret, herself, and Martin Scheepers, who was once a member of Festival Ballet. The Haydn work was of the kind which we have come to believe can only be made by Balanchine; under the circumstances, however, the lack of precision in the dancing must be excused.

Stars in their courses

A second programme brought Fokine's *Les Sylphides*, mainly well danced; it also showed some of the members of the company who had not, in the first programme, been given much chance to shine. Both Lidy de Nie (in the *Mazurka* and *Waltz pas de deux*) and Coby Spoelstra (in *Prelude*) were lyrical dancers with a nice line and definite promise.

The Tchaikovsky-Lifar *Romeo and Juliet*, with Daydé and Van Dijk together as in Nervi, was far better danced by her and beautifully, as always, by him. Oddly enough this *pas de deux* seemed to fit better into the Spanish background than the Italian one. Yet another *pas de deux*, again with Van Dijk, partnering Claude Bessy this time, scored the real hit of the evening. As the Sugar Plum Fairy in this *pas de deux* from the last act of *Casse Noisette*, Bessy suddenly revealed real Russian grandeur—that slow, solemn authority of the Russian *attitude*, the gradual unfolding of the limbs and the perfect placing of the body. All the qualities I expect to see in this *pas de deux*, and all of which I have so rarely seen in French dancers apart from Chauviré, Vyroubova (who is not really French anyway) and Verdy. On the strength of this I should very much like to see Bessy as Aurora or Odette-Odile. In the variation she was not quite so successful, though I think that she will be in time, The slight coquetry and precise, almost soubrette, quality needed here are not yet hers to command, and the result was more gauche than anything else.

These male variations are all alike, and they are all given with such apparent ease by Peter Van Dijk that it becomes tedious to keep on reiterating his excellencies. But the more I see of him the more I am convinced that he is one of the outstanding male dancers of our time. In many ways he reminds me of Babilée at his very best because he combines perfect schooling with a sensuous quality—an essential combination in male dancing at its highest peak. Unfortunately, apart from his unforgettable Georges-Emile Guerin in Charrat's *Les Algues*, I have not had much chance of seeing how good an interpretative artist he is, but if this were any criterion of his powers of characterisation, then he must be a male dancer of almost unique quality today.

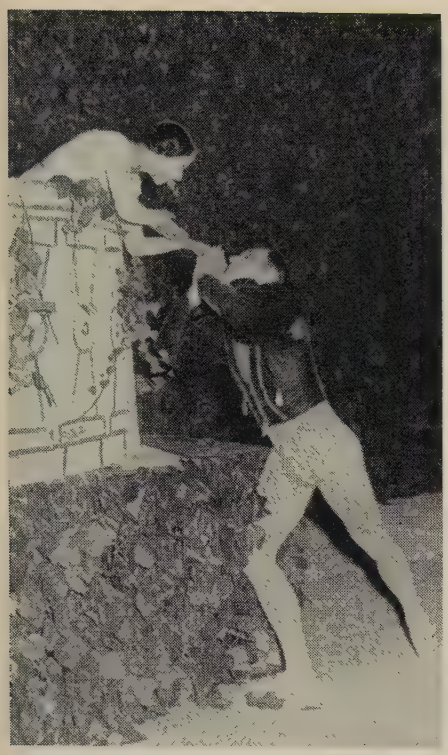
This programme finished with the Paris Opéra dancers combining with the Amsterdam company in the Lifar-Lalo *Suite en Blanc*, which hardly compared with the Paris Opéra performance given at Nervi two months ago (reported in the October number). It remains, however, one of the best ballets for alfresco treatment, and Daydé, in the "Cigarette" variation, Bessy, in the Flute dance, Van Dijk in the *Mazurka* were all excellent. But they stood out too much from the Amsterdam background, who, by this time, were suffering even more from Eastern influences. The orchestra made rather painful going of Lalo's score.

On Sunday, October 29, the Skibines arrived, and throughout the day there was speculation as to whether Skibine and Daydé would have any peasants or wilis to surround them in *Giselle* in the evening. By a great deal of re-arrangement the performance was made possible, but unfortunately these enforced games of general post do nobody any good, and it was difficult to determine what were real faults in the production and what were those brought about by unfortunate circumstance.

One feature for which Asia can most certainly not be blamed was the designing. The costumes were real shockers of great elaboration and incredible unsuitability. They bore little relation to each other and none whatsoever to the mood of this great Romantic ballet. Mercifully a lack of programme kept the designer's name veiled from me but they are, apparently, from the wardrobe of the Amsterdam company.

This was Skibine's first performance in *Giselle* since the accident to his foot and, although he can never fail to make a great impression on the stage, it could hardly amount to one of his finest performances in the Albrecht rôle. It was a most sensitive portrayal, and he partnered well, but his dancing was tentative, However, it is always a pleasure to see one of the finest Albrechts of our time.

Daydé in the title rôle seemed also to be rather tentative, and she showed more of her considerable possibilities for the future than of any fulfilment in the present. She is, at the moment, too miniature an artist and this has nothing to do with physique. Admittedly she is small, but she should develop a broadening of her characterisation—every gesture and movement should be bigger. Her Mad Scene hardly projected at all, which was a pity because I felt that somewhere there was the basis of what may become something of great eloquence. The variation was extremely well danced and so was much of the second act. I would very much like to see Daydé develop this rôle because she has quite obviously given it a great deal of thought and added many personal touches. The poked head and neck which I commented on in her performances at Nervi was not so much in evidence, and it looked as though she had been at pains to correct this fault; she should now pay attention to her arms, which need rounding and broadening in her *port de bras*.



ABOVE: *Liane Daydé and Peter Van Dijk in* Romeo and Juliet.

TOP RIGHT: *Daydé and Van Dijk with the* corps de ballet *of the Amsterdam Opera in the second act of* Swan Lake.

Dancing in the Maria Luisa Park

Photographed by Cubiles

RIGHT: *The* corps de ballet *of the Amsterdam Opera in Françoise Adret's* The Dream of Veronica.

BELOW: *Antonio's company in* Fantasia Galaica.

BELOW RIGHT: *Rosita Segovia (kneeling) with Paco Ruiz (right) in one of the numbers from the programme of Antonio's company.*

Marjorie Tallchief's only performance in Seville was in the Black Swan *pas de deux*. With Peter Van Dijk, she gave as lively a pyrotechnical display as you could wish to see. What a fantastic technician she is! Although I don't feel that what she did would fit into a full-length version of *Swan Lake*, as a concert performance it admirably suited the mood of the Sevillian audience which had, a few hours before, witnessed six deaths in the afternoon in their ancient and ochre-coloured bullring. This was a classic duel of Domencq y Diez bulls matched up to Rafael Ortega and Antonio Ordóñez. A spectacle of grace, from Ordóñez, and fearlessness and clean killing from Ortega that was of precious rarity today. The arts of the great dancer and the great matador are not so far removed as many people would have us imagine.

An evening of tropical rain washed out the final ballet spectacle on the following day, which was just as well, probably, for the Asian bug had done its work to a point when any compromise was hardly possible.

Andalusia sings

If, up to this moment, it strikes you that the only Spanish thing about this festival was its environment, then the programme on October 1 —*Cante y Bailes de Andalucía*—brought local talent into its right surroundings. Flamenco groups from various parts of Andalusia sang and danced for over three hours in the Teatro Lope de Vega. It would be more correct to say that they sang, because the dancing was not of a high order, and not even the angry stamping of El Farruco (a small, dark gipsy who danced in London with Pilar Lopez two years ago) did much to redeem the second-class nature of this side of the spectacle. But the singing, that was something very different! Groups from Sevillle, Huelva, Jerez, Cadiz and Utrera followed each other in quick succession and with such a variety of styles, rhythms and sounds that the senses became numbed. In London I have heard good flamenco singers; in Spain I have heard great ones, but this came as a revelation. It also seemed to be something of a revelation to the local audience, mainly consisting of gypsies, because they cheered to the echo the singers they liked and gave short shrift to those they did not. Out of this kaleidoscope of noise several figures stand out clearly: the neat, almost suburban, housewifely La Perla from Cadiz who sang an *Alegrías* with her eyes half-closed as though she was a medium trilling words and melodies of a rite taking place in the dawn of time; La Paquera, standing four square, bawling out songs in an extrovert way and filling the theatre with sound until it seemed that our eardrums would break and her vocal cords would snap yet doing it all with complete effortlessness; two brothers, one very tall and the other very short—Hermanos Toronjo from Huelva—whose juxtaposition of size might have been comic but wasn't, commanded admiration and respect; the elegant Rafael Farina, billed as the King of the Gypsies, whose *Soleares* did not entirely please the audience but whose *coplas* seemed to me, understanding very little, to have the mature glow of good sherry. All these and numerous others combined to make this an unforgettable evening of flamenco art which, in this collective form, is probably non-exportable.

Iberian festival problems

These Spanish festivals are becoming a bit of a puzzle to me. It is only natural that they should want to see there the great classical dancers and companies of the world. And although their native art is to them of greater interest than, say, the Morris Dance is to the people of the British Isles, the immense collection of regional and flamenco dances and songs is so much a part of their daily lives that it naturally ceases to be exotic. The exotic to them is the pure classicism of the *ballet blanc* and it is not unnatural that such works form the major part of these festivals. Yet somehow I cannot really feel that the Romantic tulle skirt and the short tutu fit happily into these surroundings. Against this turbulent background of sharp contrasts, the meanderings of moonlit princes and poets suddenly becomes terribly trite and unimportant. It is hard to compete with the pulsating life and the honourable death of the Spanish National Fiesta, with the lassitude of the early afternoon and the hectic living of the evening, with the incredible but cheerfully brave poverty and the pompous wealth. It is all so vital and violent that what we, with our more even tenor of life, think to be of great importance is suddenly shown up as a rather trifling bauble. It would seem that an energetic Eastern European folklore group would be more suitable or meaty ballets such as *The Miraculous Mandarin* or *Fall River Legend*; at least force would be meeting force on its own ground.

Then there is the question of audiences. Who goes to these festivals, the Spanish or the visiting foreigners? In many European countries the answer to this is clear-cut, in Spain it is far more complex because it depends so much on the place and the time. Granada and Santander enjoy the patronage of an international audience mainly because they come at a time of year when the world is on the move. The smaller festivals, scattered all over the Iberian peninsula are kept going almost entirely by local support. Seville is something different because, although it is a festival mounted on an international scale, it comes at a time of year—late September to early October—when an international audience has in the main gone home. There is but a smattering of foreigners in this mainly local audience.

What then should be shown at which festivals? It is a problem which, at the moment, I can only pose but not answer. But it is something which should be worked out quickly because in this teeming peninsula is a vast potential audience, fully ripe to enjoy the dance in its many forms and to which it has in its own way contributed so greatly. It is a problem on which the Ministry of Information and Tourism in Madrid together with Albert Sarfati, the French impresario who is responsible for most of the importation, are working and one can only wish them every success in the solution of this complex problem. Unlike most European countries who can show dancing and ballet throughout the year, Spain's main chance of seeing the great dance companies of the world comes only with its festivals.

LOCAL BOY COMES HOME: Antonio and Rosita Segovia on a Sevillian roof with the famous Giralda tower in the background. Antonio is a native of Seville.

SECOND LEADS: Carmen Rojas, the flamenco star of Antonio's company, with Paco Ruiz, Antonio's cousin, with the Seville Cathedral in the background. *Photos: Lido*

Gang Warfare to Shakespeare Theme

Jerome Robbins combines choreography with production in new Broadway musical

by ARTHUR TODD

REHEARSAL (above): Jerome Robbins, centre, conducts a rehearsal of the fight scene.

ANYBODYS (below): Lee Becker in one of the principal rôles as a girl friend of the Jets gang. *Photos: Fred Fehl*

West Side Story

First given at Winter Garden Theatre, New York, on September 26, 1957. A new musical based on a conception of Jerome Robbins. Book by Arthur Laurents. Music by Leonard Bernstein. Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. Scenic Production by Oliver Smith. Costumes designed by Irene Sharaff. Lighting by Jean Rosenthal. Entire production directed and choreographed by Jerome Robbins. Co-choreographer, Peter Gennaro.

Cast

THE JETS

Riff, the leader	MICKEY CALIN
Tony, his friend	LARRY KERT
Anybodys	LEE BECKER

Boys: Eddie Roll, Tony Mordente, David Winters, Grover Dale, Martin Charnin, Hank Brunjes, Tommy Abbott, Frank Green, Lowell Harris.

Girls: Wilma Curley, Carole D'Andrea, Nanette Rosen, Marilyn D'Honau, Julie Oser.

THE SHARKS

Bernardo, the Leader	KEN LE ROY
Maria, his sister	CAROL LAWRENCE
Anita, his girl	CHITA RIVERA

Boys: Jaimie Sanchez, George Marcy, Noel Schwartz, Al de Sio, Gene Gavin, Ronnie Lee, Jay Norman, Erne Castaldo, Jack Murray.

Girls: Marilyn Cooper, Reri Grist, Carmen Guiterrez, Elizabeth Taylor, Lynn Ross, Liane Plane.

THE ADULTS

Doc	ART SMITH
Schrank	ARCH JOHNSON
Krupke	WILLIAM BRAMLEY
Gladhand	JOHN HARKINS

(This new musical has scored the greatest success with the New York theatre critics since *My Fair Lady*. From a dance point of view, it re-unites the talents of Jerome Robbins, Leonard Bernstein and Oliver Smith, who made ballet history with their collaboration on *Fancy Free* for Ballet Theatre in 1944 and who followed this up in an expanded version for the Broadway musical production of *On the Town* in 1945. This triumvirate was also responsible for *Age of Anxiety* for the New York City Ballet in 1950.)

STORY

THIS musical version of the *Romeo and Juliet* story is set in contemporary terms with the tragedy centred upon warring factions of two gangs of juvenile delinquents in the upper West Side of Manhattan. In this re-telling, Romeo is a Polish-American and a member of a gang called the Jets. The heroine, recently arrived from Puerto Rico, is the sister of the leader of a rival gang, the Sharks, a group of young Puerto Ricans. They meet at a dance at a high school gymnasium (today's equivalent of the Capulet ball) and pledge their troth in a balcony scene set among the fire-escapes of a slum neighbourhood. The duel scenes become a "Rumble," a switch-blade fight in which the heroine's brother is murdered by the hero, and so it goes on following the line of its borrowed plot.

Originally, Jerome Robbins imagined the modernisation of the *Romeo and Juliet* theme, with his lovers as part of the Jewish and Italian community in the lower East Side of New York, and in this setting, quite possibly, the plot might have been more eloquent and more poignant. However, with juvenile delinquency in New York currently as much a part of today's newspaper headlines as Little Rock and the new satellite "moon," author Laurents prevailed in altering the theme to the feuding between two racially dissimilar street gangs.

If, as a result, this production has a weakness, it is in its book where its characters sometimes seem to move under contrived conditions and often do not appear to be fully rounded.

However, its galvanising score and explosive dances more than make up for this shortcoming. Nevertheless, one wonders whether or not this work might not have come closer to its original intention if it had been composed completely as a ballet.

CHOREOGRAPHY

THE entire conception has been developed in choreographic terms and the musical contains some of the most violent, explosive and ecstatic choreography that has been witnessed in the Broadway theatre in the past decade. Gang warfare is the basic premise of the plot, and Jerome Robbins raises the curtain on a prologue which is pregnant with silence and a pause. It is here that we first see a loitering gang of hoodlums (the Jets) waiting for another gang (the Sharks) to appear. Their arrogance comes to life in their shrugging shoulders and in the rhythm of their snapping fingers. When the other gang drifts in from the alley-ways in twos and threes, there is a taunt, a sneer, a raised hand and the frenzy begins.

Again, the hatred and revenge between the two groups is barely kept from erupting at the dance at the high school gymnasium and here, again, the choreographer has been masterful in his use of movement and dance phrases that depict this tension. Then, as the tension continues to mount, he has one gang leader advise his followers to play it "cool," and here there is a graphic movement picture of a group of hoodlums lashing about in their instinctive desire to kill. There is a challenge to a fist fight, a scuffle and a change to switch-blades that leads to murder, and the whole movement pattern on the stage erupts into an explosion.

Happily, there is one brief interlude that is flowing, lyrical and ecstatic, and this occurs in the second-act ballet, *Somewhere*, in which Robbins gives the young lovers a view of an unconstricted world that they will never know on earth. The dreary tenement walls withdraw, fences whirl up into space in a magnificent transformation scene where a cloud bank of floating fire-escapes appear. Here the movement starts freely, openly and simply, but as it continues, reality begins to enter, there is a nightmarish re-staging of the "rumble" and the ballet concludes back in grim reality with the tenements and fences sliding ominously into place just like so many prison walls.

Elsewhere there are two other outstanding dance numbers. One, *America*, in which a group of Puerto Rican girls sing jeeringly of their new life in American slums, uses Latin American rhythms and gestures which provide a welcome change of pace from the otherwise almost searing impact of the dances. Then, too, there is *Gee, Officer Krupke*, a rather tasteless lament by the young hoodlums about those who would improve their outlook, that is made noteworthy only because of its masterful use of mime and group movement. It is fast, bitter and sardonic.

All the dancing in this production is of a piece. Every episode contributes to the advancement of the plot, the more complete delineation of the characters and the onward rush of the tautness, ecstasy and anguish. Since the characters are often inarticulate, the dances say what words never could. Although

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THE START OF THE TROUBLE (top left): The dance at the Gym which is attended by the rival gangs—the Jets and the Sharks. In the foreground are: Chita Rivera, Ken Le Roy, Mickey Calin and Lee Becker.
PUERTO RICANS IN NEW YORK (middle left): Chita Rivera, in the foreground, with the Shark girls in a cynical number about the acceptance and place of Puerto Ricans in American life.
DRUG STORE SCENE (bottom left): Lee Becker (centre) with members of the Jets gang in the number "Cool." Photos: Fred Fehl

its book neither solves nor explains juvenile delinquency, Jerome Robbins' contribution is masterful and stunning, and the way that he has furthered the cause and importance of dance in our contemporary theatre is enormous.

DANCING

SINCE Jerome Robbins directed and choreographed the entire production, he had an important voice in the casting of all the rôles. With the exception of four actors who play adults in the cast, all the rest of the members of the company dance. The company, first and foremost, was selected for its dancing skills and they, indeed, are brilliant. Aside from Chita Rivera and Lee Becker, both of whom have already achieved a measure of importance in other dance fields, the rest of the company consists of young unknowns who were chosen for their dance talent and the type-casting that was necessary for each of their specific rôles. Certainly these dancers have the most rigorous assignment on Broadway with their eight-performance-a-week schedule, but they carry it off magnificently.

DECOR

TENEMENT area-ways, fire-escapes, old fences and highway trestles do not sound much like the material for theatre magic, yet scenic designer Oliver Smith has used these slum settings in a magnificent manner that contributes enormously to the mood and the meaning of this musical. His buildings are dreary tenements that seem to close in on these slum children. Their colours are sombre, but rich and meaningful. His use of orange fire-escapes, especially in the balcony scene, is highly imaginative and decorative, reminiscent in a way of the oriental theatre. His decorations for the dance in the high-school gymnasium descend and ascend again to the flies at the top of the theatre. His scene for the stabbing under the highway trestle is magnificently composed from a pictorial point of view and provides a marvellous spatial setting for the gang battle. Most creative of all, of course, is the transformation scene he has devised with the tenement walls whirling away to be replaced by a sky mirage of fire-escapes.

Irene Sharaff, similarly, has kept completely within the mood of the surroundings and characters with her costume designs. The leather jackets and dungarees are those worn by today's street hoodlums, but many are heightened in intensity by the use of blatant colours. A whole change of line and colour is provided by the costumes designed for the Puerto Rican girls, these with frilly skirts and billowing petticoats, are in garish native colours.

No report on this production would be complete without mention of Jean Rosenthal's eloquent lighting.

MUSIC

LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S score has been composed primarily to underline this danced narrative. It has a wide, impressive range from the harsh and ominous to the melodic. It has a nervous drive and a fierce beat, and the orchestration is biting and astringent. It is doubtful whether any of the songs will have a separate success on their own taken out of context. However, they are exactly right where they are because they skilfully underline the dance and dramatic patterns.

SWITCH BLADE FIGHT (top right): Ken Le Roy, as Bernardo, leader of the Sharks, with Mickey Calin (right) as Riff the leader of the Jets, in the fight which ends the first half of West Side Story. *JUVENILE DELINQUENTS (middle right): Members of the Jets—Action (Eddie Roll) and Snowboy (Grover Dale)—in the satirical number about adults' concern for juvenile delinquency called "Gee, Officer Krupke."*
BALLET SEQUENCE (bottom right): Ken Le Roy in the ballet "Somewhere" in which the young lovers are united in a happy world they will never know on earth. *Photos: Fred Fehl*

Spain in the Emerald Isle

Ballet Espanol of Pilar Lopez in Dublin

Reviewed by PETER WILLIAMS

Photographs taken during the actual performance, by ROY ROUND

ZARZUELA: Above, Nana Lorca and Pilar Lopez in La Bronca (the fight) *from* Agua, Azucarillos y Arguardiente. *Below, Pilar Lopez in the* Pascalle *from the same work.*

PERHAPS the Spanish Armada has something to do with it, and that the Irish really are descended from the survivors of a wrecked galleon? Whatever it is there is no doubt of the affinity between the peoples of both countries—both temperamentally and physically. In Dublin they seem to lap-up Spanish dancing with as much gusto as their excellent whisky and Guinness, for Pilar Lopez and her Ballet Español were scheduled to play at the Gaiety Theatre there for two weeks and the enthusiasm was such that they were forced to stay for a third. The performances which I saw, at the end of their second week, were greeted with wild and genuine applause less indiscriminate than in London.

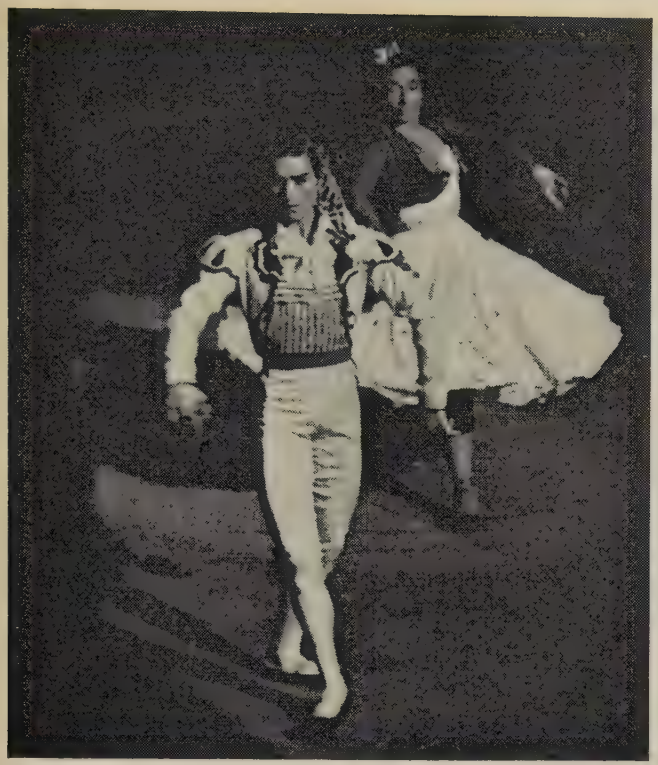
The programme was different to the recent one given in London, and reviewed in last month's DANCE AND DANCERS, though none of the items would be new to an audience who has seen every one of the Pilar Lopez programmes in England over the past seven years.

Opening with *Pepita Jimenez*, Pilar Lopez reverted to the number, in homage to her beloved sister, La Argentinita, which has almost become traditional in her programmes; rather like the Japanese Kabuki players blessing their stage. It is a number of moving dignity which was realised by the three boys—Antonio Gades, Curro Velez and Mario Maya—and, of course, Pilar herself.

Other short numbers revived included that charming arrangement of Castilian dances, *Escenas Castellanas*, and the Andalusian shepherd's dance, *El Cabrerillo*. The former, with its two coy but knowing girls (Lopez and Nana Lorca) and over-confident amorous boy (Mario Maya), is naive and gay but never embarrassing like some peasant numbers can be and Lopez and Lorca sing the infectious song with shrill charm. Maya, with his wide gypsy eyes, is starting to develop a definite personality. He did not, however, manage to convey the pathos that Vargas used to in *El Cabrerillo* as the boy torn between the love of his pet lamb and the advances of a flirtatious village girl. It is possible that Eduardo Serrano ("El Guito," of whom I wrote at length last month) would be more suitable. Pilar herself was, as always, delightful in this, and she has a new swain in Curro Velez, a forceful dancer of excellent technique but with not enough modulation.

The revival of *Agua, Azucarillos y Aguardiente* (at one time called, *In Old Madrid*) was very welcome and extremely popular with the audience, who understood and appreciated it more than is usual with a London audience. It is a lively arrangement of a 19th-century Zarzuela to Chueca music, and even today seems to reflect some of the life in Madrid's great park, El Retiro. Typical characters are introduced—biscuit and water vendors, dandies and their girls—and they sell their wares, flirt, fight and make-up again all through the medium of theatrical dances of the time. It almost does for Madrid what Massine's *Le Beau Danube* did for Vienna. Pilar turns and sways to castanet accompaniment in her *Seguidillas*; Dorita Ruiz and Mario Maya shows great humour in their stately *Vals*, which is like what our local "Palais" would call an "Olde Tyme Waltz," and the whole company goes through the general high-jinks with a remarkable understanding of style and period.

I often think that the time has come when I can never see anything danced to Ravel's *Bolero*—let alone listen to the wretched piece of music which became the bane of the composer's latter years—but there is something quite disarming about the version of La Argentinita which Pilar Lopez has preserved. In the opening



BOLERO (above): Left, Antonio Gades and Pilar Lopez in the classical section of the ballet to Ravel's Bolero. *Right, Curro Velez, Dorita Ruiz, Pilar Lopez and Antonio Gades in the finale.*

BULERIAS (below): Eduardo Serrano (El Guito), followed by Pilar Lopez, leads the company off stage at the end of the programme.

classical section, the *pas ciseaux* are now very well executed by Nana Lorca, and she gives the whole solo with great refinement; in the later classical part, Pilar is well matched by Antonio Gades. The work, developing as it does from classical Spanish to Andalusian flamenco, amounts to exciting theatre, and was as well given as it ever has been.

When that amusing and ironic burlesque of foreign interpretations of Spanish dance—*L'Espagnolade*—was given in London two years ago, some critics thought it in bad taste. As given now by Dorita Ruiz and Antonio Gades it has more style and does not descend to mere slapstick. It reproduces the full horror of "Spanish scenas" in operettes, revues and cabaret entertainments and both the dancers gave it with a real sense of fun.

The solo, *Danza del Chivato*, was the first dance which Antonio Gades gave in London two years ago. Then it was promising but lacking in polish. He danced this again in Dublin, and more than anything it provided the proof of his development in the intervening years. He takes the stage with the authority of an artist of many more years experience than he can boast; his whip-lash precision and speed, his good schooling and complete lack of vulgarity make him one of the most satisfying of the young entry of Spanish male dancers.

Again, as in London, Eduardo Serrano's *Baile de la Caba* was a show-stopper, and so was Alberto Portillo's classical *Bolero*. The latter having regained his technique which appeared rather weak at the beginning of the London season.

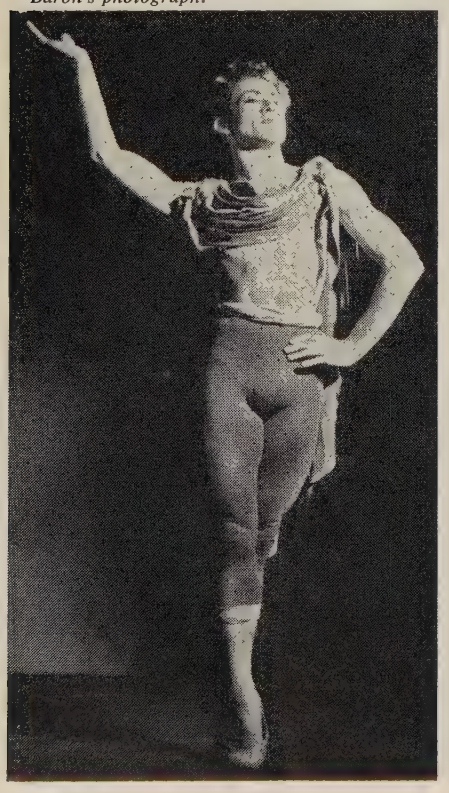
There is something about this company which is different from almost any other Spanish group—a warmth and friendliness that not only crosses the footlights but is noticeable among the artists when they are performing on stage. This is obviously due to the fine character and warm personality of Pilar Lopez herself. Undoubtedly one of the great stars of the Spanish dance, she has none of that remote star quality that would place her apart from her company, who are more like her brothers and sisters both on stage and in private life. Combined with the splendid dancing of the company, this friendly atmosphere is something unique in the theatre.

ACCENT ON THE MALE : I Alexander Grant

It's more than vigour and bounce

by JOHN PERCIVAL

TWO MASSINE ROLES: Grant, as the Barber, is seen with Margot Fonteyn in Mam'zelle Angot *in Mandinian's photograph; below, as the Clockmaker in* Clock Symphony *in Baron's photograph.*



TRY, for a moment, to imagine Alexander Grant dancing, and the likelihood is that you will visualise him irrepressibly and apparently inexhaustibly leaping up and down, over and over again. As the Barber in *Mam'zelle Angot*, as the Jester in *Cinderella*, as Ivan in *The Sleeping Beauty*—in one rôle after another during the past decade, his powerful elevation and springy *ballon* have been a never-failing source of delight. Here, one is tempted to think, in the vigour and strength and bite of his dancing, is the secret of Grant's eminence as principal character dancer of the Royal Ballet. But this is only half the story.

Do you remember when *Ballabile* was first performed and just ten dancers somehow coped with all the rôles which have since been shared among more than twice as many? At that time Grant played the man fishing during the Sunday on the River scene. Except for his entry and departure, he just stood at the side of the stage, holding a rod; yet he somehow contrived to give the impression of a man absorbed in his hobby, a real person completely self-contained. There could hardly be a rôle more completely the opposite of those we tend to think typical of him, yet it could not have been more perfectly done.

This is, in a way, the most striking example of Grant's ability to represent a character on stage, simply because it was achieved by concentration rather than movement. Yet almost any of Grant's rôles could be taken to illustrate his power of characterisation, even those which are merely *divertissements*. In the Neapolitan dance in *Swan Lake* his face takes on the cheeky grin of a guttersnipe, and the slight shrug of his shoulders as he raises his hands might be that of an Italian urchin. In the Three Ivans, his dancing has the breeziness and broad sweep which we have seen in genuine Russian folk dancing. When he dances as the Spirit of Fire in *Homage to the Queen*, his movements become flickering like those of flames and in moments of repose he broods like a smouldering ember. This rôle, with its violent twisting leaps, its sudden falls and its long slides across the stage is, perhaps, the most spectacular in the Royal Ballet's repertory, yet neither in this nor in any of Grant's other rôles have I ever been aware of the slightest element of personal display on the part of the dancer. However showy the part and with whatever dash he dances it, he himself seems submerged in the character he is playing.

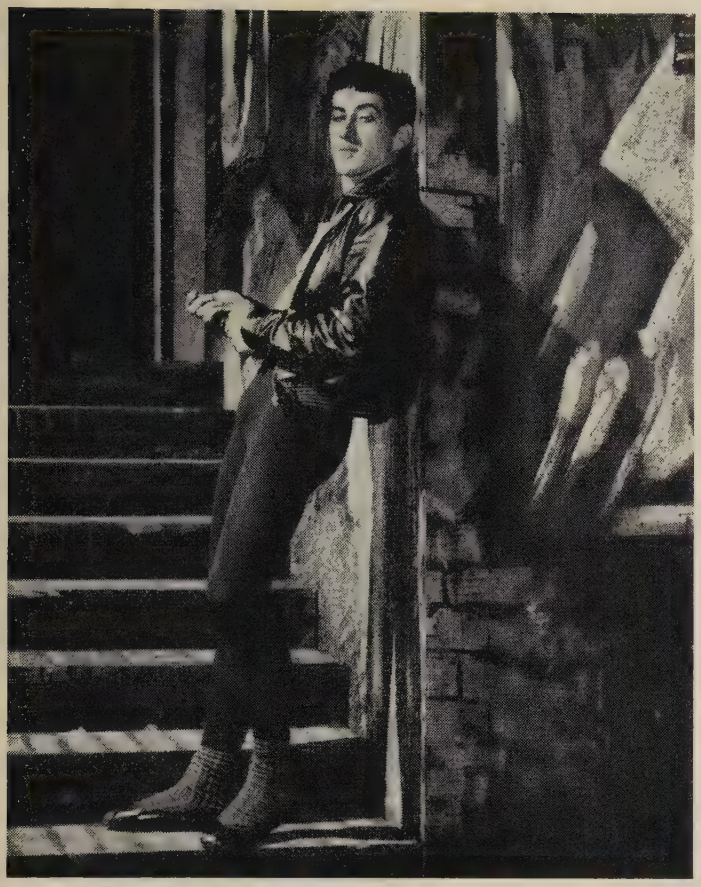
For an explanation of this quality of Grant's we must look to the beginnings of his career. Although his parents sent him to dancing classes as a young boy, Grant did not dance professionally until he was twenty-one. In New Zealand, where he was born, there simply was no professional theatre where he could dance, and although he won a scholarship (given by the Royal Academy of Dancing) to continue his training in Britain, transport was unobtainable during the war. Consequently his first experience was in cabarets and concert parties. His conception of ballet had meanwhile been formed by two companies, headed respectively by Woizikovsky and by Baronova and Dolin, which visited New Zealand at the end of the 'thirties. In these companies the boy Grant saw ballet used as a brilliant and dramatic form of theatre.

The war ended, a passage to London was unexpectedly available, and Grant sailed to take up his deferred scholarship. Here he found a ballet very different from his Ballet Russe memories. The repertory was almost entirely limited to those modest works which it had been practicable to stage in wartime conditions, and despite demobilisation there was still a pitiful shortage of male dancers. There was no time or leisure for disappointment, however. He had a new home in a new country; the opportunity, never before available, to go to the theatre on all his free evenings; the beginnings of a career, with new parts to learn all the time; and all around him, a ballet company enlarging, developing and growing-up.

The main Sadler's Wells Ballet was being expanded for Covent Garden and a new company formed at the Wells. Grant attended classes first with the Theatre Ballet, and while still a student appeared with them in *Khadra* and *Façade*, dancing also at Covent Garden in the new production of *The Sleeping Beauty* as a peasant boy and later in the Three Ivans. Before the end of 1946 he was a listed soloist with the main company. He had jumped neatly and surprisingly through a large hoop at the première of *Les Sirènes*—the first of many rôles Ashton was to create for him—and had danced his first major rôle on taking over Brian Shaw's part in *Symphonic Variations*.

The next year was, if anything, even more hectic, and in the late autumn of 1947 Grant found himself learning his first leading rôle. Massine had already mounted two revivals for the Wells, and Grant had successfully taken small but important rôles in each. As the Dandy in *The Three Cornered Hat* he has never since been equalled for his neatness and precision in the little dance on the bridge, and in *La Boutique Fantasque* his buoyant Poodle was soon followed by a downright earthy performance of the Tarantella. Now Massine was staging *Mam'zelle Angot* for the first time outside America, and Grant was to play Massine's own former rôle of the Barber, partnering Fonteyn. He was by now twenty-two and had been dancing for less than two years.

Grant's success in the new ballet was immediate and complete, the combination of ebullient bounciness in his dancing and pathetic



AS A HOODLUM in Rodrigues's Miraculous Mandarin
Photo: Houston Rogers

AS PETRUSHKA in the Royal Ballet's revival of Fokine's ballet.
Photo: Roger Wood

simplicity in his characterisation proving irresistible. For Grant himself the occasion was doubly important. Not only did it establish him at once as one of the company's most valuable dancers, but it jolted him suddenly into a sense of artistic awareness. Massine had begun rehearsals by showing a film of the Ballet Theatre production with scenery and costumes by Doboujinsky. In this, the Barber was played as a dandified figure, and Grant naturally accepted this interpretation. When he saw the new costume designed for the rôle by Dérain, he was puzzled: this did not look like a dandy's garb. His astonishment was completed, however, at the dress rehearsal, when he suddenly learnt that he was to wear the now familiar fuzzy yellow wig. At once he realised that he had to change his whole idea of the rôle—and, incidentally, to devise a new and far more fantastic make-up to go with it.

Ever since then, Grant has always tried to see a new rôle as a whole, and appearance, action and music all help him to assume the right character. As soon as possible he finds out what sort of costume he will have to wear. Knowing what he will look like, he comes gradually during rehearsals to feel and understand the character. His make-up is usually fanciful rather than realistic, both more elaborate and more imaginative than that of most dancers; as he draws the lines on his face, it is as if he were hiding himself behind a mask so that his own personality should not intrude on the character he is to play. In a sense this is always in vain: his features and physique are so distinctive that he is always recognisable under any disguise. In this he reminds me a little of Laurence Olivier: always immediately identifiable, yet subtly different in every part.

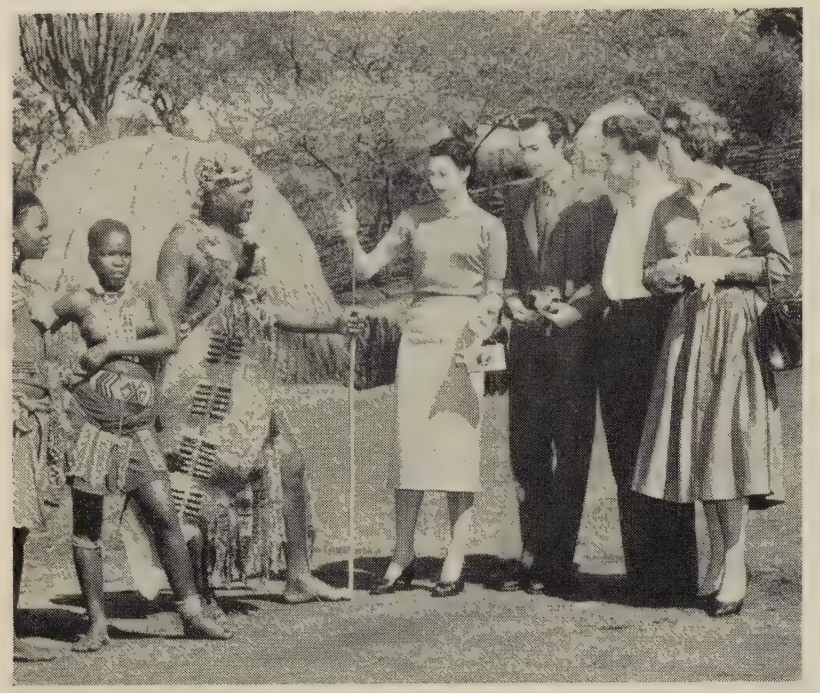
Having learnt, so early in his career, an approach which enabled him to add the proper interpretation of a rôle to his already formidable dancing ability, Grant was, in effect, formed as an artist. Since then he has danced an amazing variety of parts, comic or tragic, grotesque or brilliant, sympathetic or villainous, nearly all with success. He has had more than fifty different rôles, including about a score of important creations and many of the leading rôles in standard works: de Valois' *Satan and Rake*, Massine's *Miller and Can-Can Dancer*, Ashton's *Dago* and Fokine's *Petrushka*; and it is not surprising that he most enjoys dancing two contrasting rôles on one programme.

Naturally he has his limitations. Grant is not the dancer to make the best of a poor rôle; he brings out whatever is in the choreography, but cannot impose his own personality to hide its defects. One or two ballets which have since disappeared from the repertory showed his inability to make bricks without straw. His short, powerful physique would be inappropriate in a conventional romantic rôle, although first Andrée Howard, in the film *Steps of the Ballet*, and later Ashton in *Madame Chrysanthème*, have shown that he can play a romantic part if it is created for him. His classical, academic technique is not impeccable, his *tours en l'air* in particular are weak; but this has not prevented him from giving surprisingly good performances in some classical rôles, notably in *Scènes de Ballet*, in the interpolated *pas de six* in *Swan Lake*, and above all in his last-act solo as Eros in *Sylvia*. As Frantz in *Coppélia* he revealed a certain maladroitness as a partner in classical *pas de deux*. Perhaps this is only for lack of sufficient experience in this type of work; certainly no fault could be found with his partnering of Elaine Fifield in *Madame Chrysanthème* or of Fonteyn in *Daphnis and Chloe*, and both these ballets contain high and difficult lifts demanding physical strength, skill and a kind of daredevil self-confidence.

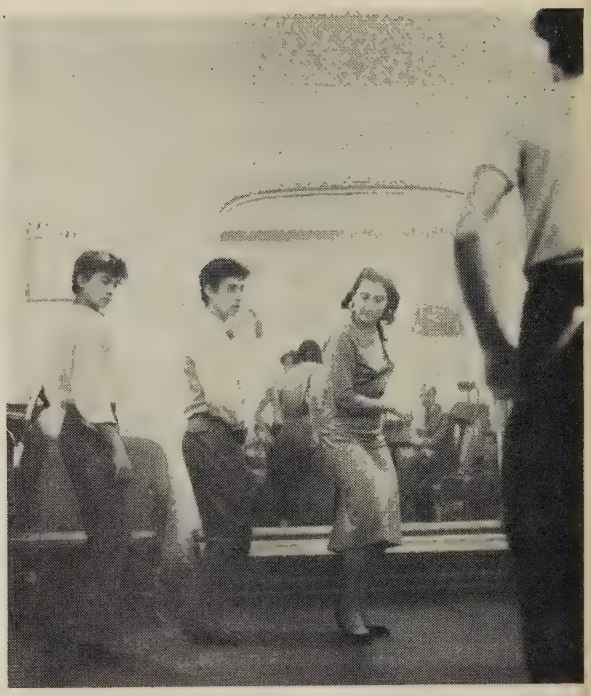
The range of Grant's abilities, despite his limitations, is strikingly demonstrated by the fact that of the many choreographers who have worked with the Wells since the war, all but two have used him in their ballets.

To all his rôles, Grant brings strength and precision of movement. The power, vigour and pace of his character dancing are unequalled in British ballet, and he brings the same qualities of exact timing and sharp attack to those classical parts which suit him best. He never does anything on stage that is without meaning, and he never gives the impression of doing less than his best. Moreover, he is never satisfied with an easy success, but must go on improving. His performance in The Three Ivans has always been spectacular enough to bring the house down, yet season after season the choreography has been slightly modified to introduce some new and yet more brilliant feat on his part. When he first appeared as Petrushka he received a great personal ovation, and many enthusiastic notices. Yet the criticism of a minority, that they were not moved by his performance, convinced him that his conception of the character was not yet carrying fully across the footlights, and when I discussed it with him recently, he was determined to remedy this.

From all this two comparisons spring to mind. One is with that other perfectionist who heads the Royal Ballet. Like Fonteyn, Grant dances always as though there were no such things as a routine performance, but every appearance must somehow be made a special occasion. Like Fonteyn, too, he contrives almost always to give a rôle the little extra dash and excitement which transforms the good into the best. The other comparison I would make is with the dancers who came from Moscow last autumn to show us their conception of ballet as a theatrical art. Grant's particular kind of dancing ability, the sincerity and conviction of all he does, his whole approach to ballet make him possibly the British dancer who could most easily dance with the Bolshoi and not stand out as an intruder.



BERYL WITH THE ZULUS: Beryl Grey (centre) talking to the Chief of a Zulu tribe. On her left are Oleg Briansky (her partner), David Tidbeold (her conductor) and Mireille Briansky (Briansky's wife). This was one of the many incidents during Beryl Grey's triumphant South African concert tour. Photo: Charles Bird



PILAR REHEARSES DEBUSSY: Pilar Lopez with Eduardo Serrano and Mario Maya during a rehearsal of her new ballet—Preludes and Images *to Debussy music—in the green-room, the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. Photo: Roy Round*

curtain up!

Britain, also ran

IN spite of our announcement last month that Beryl Grey will be the first British ballerina to appear on the Bolshoi stage when she goes there in December, she will have been beaten by a head—or rather, a month—by a French ballerina, Liane Daydé, to be the first Western ballerina to appear there. Two stars of the Paris Opéra, Daydé and Michel Renault, danced with the Bolshoi ballet in *Giselle* and *Swan Lake* during November.

Possibly the greatest surprise comes from the announcement that the first full-size company from the West to dance at the Bolshoi is to be American. I hear that Lucia Chase has been instructed by the American State Department to arrange performances of her Ballet Theatre in the U.S.S.R., Poland and Czechoslovakia during April and May of the coming year. Works such as Robbins' *Fancy Free*, de Mille's *Rodeo* and *Fall River Legend*, Loring's *Billy the Kid*, Tudor's *Pillar of Fire* and Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*, in addition to other contemporary and classical works are likely to be seen in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. The company of 50 will be headed by Kaye, Serrano, Verdy, Kriza, Bruhn and Scott Douglas.

It seems that the rumoured visit of the Royal Ballet to Russia was just—a rumour. David Webster when recently questioned about it, is reported as having said, "we haven't been invited yet."

Trade can help ballet

IN the old days, ballet companies not enjoying the benefits of a State grant were kept going by the generosity of wealthy people. Today there are few people with private incomes of such magnitude that they have much left over to help the arts. There are, on the other hand, a number of rich firms with plenty of money to spare and who, by helping the arts, can also do themselves a bit of good from the advertising and prestige gained by their generosity.

The firm of Schweppes recently sponsored some educational and instructional films for the Royal Academy of Dancing, and now this firm has made a gift of £1,000 to the English Stage Society towards the production of a new play. The firm of Courtaulds has made enormous contributions to the arts, their most recent being generous gifts of materials for Ballet Rambert's endowment fund, which provided the company with many new costumes for their tour of China. Some years ago an American firm of scent manufacturers sponsored a new work for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

I wonder which firm will be the first to sponsor a new ballet for an English company? So wake up Britain! Ballet has been responsible for bringing millions of pounds worth of trade to this country, the least you can do is show your thanks in some tangible way and, as I have already said, you could be increasing your trade at the same time.

Choreographers move on

THERE was once a time when choreographers did little other than choreograph for ballet companies. Now their field is being immensely widened. Already in this issue you will have read of Jerome Robbins, who has not only mounted the ballets for the new Broadway hit musical, *West Side Story*, but has also been responsible for the whole production.

On this side of the Atlantic, choreographers are moving in the same direction but are going a step further—they are even writing musicals. The success of John Cranko's revue, *Cranks*, which has been a hit in four countries, has gone to his head in more ways then one. The title of his new musical is called *Keep Your Hair On*. For this he has written the story and the lyrics, and will, of course, be responsible for the choreography and production. It goes into rehearsal early in the new year, and is due to open in the spring. Gilbert Vernon, the ex-Royal ballet soloist who was so good in *Cranks*, will have an important rôle as a hairdresser who is a phoney Frenchman. Tony Armstrong Jones, the successful photographer of ballet, who now takes pictures of the Royal Family, is to be responsible for the décor which will consist of blown-up photographs.

Bonjour, Sagan !

EVEN if you never read her first famous novel, *Bonjour Tristesse*, you will probably know who Françoise Sagan is. Her love of driving fast cars has landed her in the ditch as well as onto the front page of the world's newspapers. Having written three best-sellers she is now turning her undoubted genius to ballet. George Skibine tells me that he is to do the choreography for a big ballet spectacle which the French novelist is writing. This three-act ballet will be first given at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt in Paris during February. Bernard Buffet is to design it and the music is by Michel Magne, whom Skibine describes as a sort of French Stan Kenton. At the moment it is uncertain who will get the leading rôle, but Jacques d'Amboise, New York City Ballet star and also famous in films, has been approached. The spectacle will use many Negro and other dancers, and promises to be an extremely exciting dance spectacle of a new kind.

It is also rumoured that Sagan is to write the book of the ballet which Skibine is creating for next year's Edinburgh Festival. This is probably going to be called *Ondine* and will be designed by Léonor Fini. After the festival the ballet will possibly go into the repertoire of an American company.

Perhaps we are wrong?

A DANCER, whose ability I have never felt matched up to the publicity she received, recently flew to London to appear on Television The photograph of her in the newspapers carried a caption saying that she was a singer. Perhaps they are right and we, all these years, have just been going to the wrong show?

Look, Ma we're not dancing !

STRIKES in opera houses are becoming a serious factor in impeding the progress of ballet. The recent strike at Stockholm's Royal Theatre made it impossible for Alicia Markova to appear there. However, I hear that the dancers were determined not to be put out of action entirely, and with considerable ingenuity they gave performances against black curtains. The lighting was managed by a member of the administration. This strike of stage-hands lasted for several months, but finished during the last days of October.

As Stockholm got back to normal, the stage-hands of the Paris Opéra decided to go on strike. Here there are over 80 stage-hands, and a horrifying vision is conjured up that some day they might all decide to work at the same time. Even on a stage as large as that at the Opéra, there would be very little room left for the dancers. Even the eloquent speeches of Jean Cocteau, whose *La Dame à la Licorne* was due for its Opéra première, would not budge them. This surprised nobody as even in quick changes during a performance it is difficult to make them move fast.

Listen, Ma we're talking !

OFTEN has it been said that dancers are better seen than heard. Festival Ballet believes otherwise with the result that many of its members have given great help to the art of ballet throughout Britain's provincial cities. Anton Dolin, Natalie Krassovska, Marilyn Burr, Louis Godfrey, André Prokovsky, Ronald Emblen and David Scott have all given lectures to audiences ranging from 150 to over 1,000 schoolchildren. The two latter named have proved to be excellent speakers on the technical training of the male dancer. The Directors of Education in the various towns have all co-operated up to the hilt. An interesting feature of these lectures has been question-time and ensuing discussion. The remarkable knowledge shown by many of the children gives high hopes for tomorrow's ballet audience in this country. In addition many towns have, through various organisations, arranged talks for adults.

Royal Ballet stars engaged

GOSSIP spreads like wild-fire in the world of ballet, but the recent news from America took the usual ballet know-alls by surprise. After Philip Chatfield danced Franz in *Coppélia* during the Royal Ballet's season in New York, it was announced that he was going to marry Rowena Jackson. Up to this point their two names had not been, in the words of the popular press, "romantically linked." Both dancers have made their entire career with the Wells organisation, and their loyal service has earned them a growing popularity with the public.

I hear that they plan to get married when the Royal Ballet returns to Britain in February, and that their honeymoon will be spent in that romantic but watery city—Venice. They will thus be at least the fourth pair of dancers from the company to have got married in less than a year, though don't be surprised if you hear of some more in the near future. It is amazing what these long trans-American tours can do!

Equine ballerinas

LAST month I told you about the lady who named a bay filly after Markova, now another British ballerina has been compared to our four-footed friends—and by her husband. "Ballerinas and horses are really very much alike," Dr. Roberto Arias (Dame Margot Fonteyn's husband) was recently reported as having said in Washington. He went on, "They have to eat professionally, they always have very delicate leg troubles, and have you noticed, artists who paint ballerinas well also paint horses well?" Often have I heard someone in an audience remark, "my dear, she danced like a horse," in reference to the performance of a ballerina, not one of those mentioned above.

happy birthday to...

		December
Fernand Nault	Ballet Theatre	27
Maretta Grace	Festival Ballet	28
Christina Katin	Festival Ballet	28
Margaret Dale	Television Producer	30
		1958
		January
Mary Coulson	Festival Ballet	1
Peter Clegg	Royal Ballet	3
Anya Linden	Royal Ballet	3
Ray Barra	Ballet Theatre	3
Diana Dear	Ballet Theatre	3
Nana Prudente	Ballet Theatre	5
Dame Adeline Genée		6
Virginia Barnes	Ballet Theatre	7
Bronislava Nijinska	Teaching in America	8
Johaar Mosaval	Royal Ballet	8
Calliope Venieris	Ballet Theatre	10
Kurt Jooss	In Germany	12
Christine Alderton	Royal Ballet	13
Roland Petit		13
John Kriza	Ballet Theatre	15
Mary Munro	Ballet Rambert Organisation	15
Nora Kaye	Ballet Theatre	17
Margaret Mercier	Royal Ballet	17
Belinda Wright	Festival Ballet	18
Bridget Badham	Royal Ballet	18

PARTY FOR THE ROYAL BALLET: David Webster, General Administrator of Covent Garden, thanking J. Alden Talbot for the party he gave for the entire Royal Ballet at his home, Smoke Rise, during the New York season. Also in the picture can be seen Margot Fonteyn, Dr. Arias, David Blair, Maryon Lane, Robert Hughes and Bryan Ashbridge. *Photo: Radford Bascome*

Dancer you will know

Photo: Mike Davis

ANDRÉ PROKOVSKY

BORN in Paris of Russian parents. Studied with a number of the leading Parisian teachers. Debut in Paris. In 1957 *he went to Moscow to take part in an international* Cours de Danse, *where he was awarded a silver medal. He was seen by Anton Dolin who invited him to England to join London's Festival Ballet. He made his British debut at the Festival Hall at the public preview performance of Dolin's male* pas de quatre *prepared for Festival Ballet's* 1957 *Birthday Gala.*

Creations: 1st Variation in Variations for Four.

FEW dancers have had so wide an influence on their profession as Anton Dolin and Serge Lifar. Both men, Diaghilev's last *premiers danseurs*, occupy administrative and choreographic positions in Western ballet, yet their importance as an inspiration to the younger generation of male dancers can be truly called incalculable. With great unselfishness they have created, partly by personal example, a whole new race of brilliant male dancers, whose influence is now widely felt in Western ballet.

André Prokovsky is the latest in a long line of Dolin discoveries and protegés that started with such stars as Franklin and Kriza and has recently included Gilpin and Flindt. At the moment this somewhat shy 18-year-old French boy shows far more promise than fully-developed ability. Apart from an outstanding jump and a natural *élan*, his dancing in Dolin's cruelly testing *Variations for Four* had a rough untidiness which could not but be shown up by the polished elegance of the others. Yet this is of little importance as in his still coltish dancing was undeniable distinction.

Records for Christmas

Reviewed by
DAVID HUNT

First Complete *Coppelia*

Delibes: *Coppélia*. Suisse Romande Orchestra (Ernest Ansermet). Decca LXT5342-3. 2 12in. 79*s*. 11*d*.

AT last we are being given complete recordings of full-length ballets—from Mercury we have had uncut performances of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*; from Decca, Britten's *The Prince of the Pagodas* and this new *Coppélia*; and a recording under Faier of *Giselle*, made when the Bolshoi were here, is, I hear, due to be released in the New Year by E.M.I.

Whereas the recent Mercury recordings of the three Tchaikovsky classics brought to light a fascinating wealth of unfamiliar music omitted from present-day Western productions, this first complete *Coppélia* brings few surprises. From a musical point of view at least, *Coppélia* as we know it is practically identical with the original production of 1870. Modern productions abbreviate certain of the dances and leave out a lot of the linking music.

Ansermet does not observe all the repeats, but as there is a great deal of repetition in the music anyway, nobody is likely to object on this count. The only actual cut is in the *Marche des Guerrières*, the music nowadays used as a variation for Frantz, originally a *travesti* rôle. The performance, a good routine one but nothing more, I found disappointing. Though not without an occasional roughness, the playing is cleaner and better disciplined than that by the Covent Garden Orchestra under Irving on HMV's abridged recording on CLP1046. If far from ideal, Irving's conducting shows greater appreciation for the spirit of the ballet than does Ansermet's, which left me with the conviction that the veteran Swiss conductor had a very poor opinion of the score.

There is a want of drive and vitality in such things as the Mazurka and Czardas; and by playing down the warm-hearted sentimentality of the music Ansermet merely succeeds in making it sound insipid. Nevertheless, this is a lot better than the average theatre performance we so often have to endure, and the recording has superb delicacy and clarity.

The records come in an attractive box album, and on a separate sheet an account of the ballet lucidly relates music to action—though it was a pity that the writer had to repeat the usual cliché about *Coppélia* having set "a hitherto unequalled standard for music in this genre." Adam's *Giselle* (1841) is unquestionably a greater ballet score than *Coppélia*, as was made so abundantly clear by the revelation, brought last year by the Bolshoi, of hearing it in Adam's own orchestration and for once not cut to ribbons.

Chabrier and Bizet

Chabrier: *Bourrée Fantasque*. Bizet: *Roma*. New York City Ballet Orchestra (Leon Barzin). Vox PL9320. 12in. 41*s*. 9*d*.

THE ironic, witty *Bourrée Fantasque* was an extremely popular item in New York City Ballet's repertoire for their two Covent Garden seasons. In his sleeve-note for the record, Balanchine discusses his earlier ballet to Chabrier, the wonderful *Cotillon*, and makes this interesting comment: "When I emigrated to America in 1933, I was continually urged to revive *Cotillon*, but not until 16 years later did I feel I could use again the music of Chabrier, and then only in an entirely new way."

First we hear the *Marche Joyeuse*, here much abbreviated, though if memory serves correctly, the whole of it is played as an overture in theatre performances. Then comes the *Bourrée Fantasque* itself, in Mottl's orchestration, followed by the nostalgic interlude from the opera *Gwendoline*, and finally the boisterous *Fête Polonaise* from *Le Roi Malgré Lui*.

Balanchine's ballet to Bizet's *Roma*, actually the composer's Second Symphony, has not been seen yet in this country, but this first recording of the colourful score is no less welcome. Though Bizet did not here repeat the miracle of his earlier Symphony in C, it is, nevertheless, a delightful work well worth getting to know, and the breezy tarantella finale in particular makes one look forward to seeing the ballet staged. There are four movements, but a large cut, as in the ballet, removes all but the introduction to the opening movement.

Both scores are played with infectious exuberance under New York City Ballet's musical director, and the recording is excellent.

Prokofiev for Balanchine

Prokofiev: *The Prodigal Son*. New York City Ballet Orchestra (Leon Barzin). Vox PL9310. 12in. 41*s*. 9*d*.

PROKOFIEV'S *The Prodigal Son* was the last ballet created by the Diaghilev Company, and was first performed in 1929 with choreography by Balanchine and décor by the famous painter Rouault.

The sleeve-note for this important first recording of the music incorporates a letter from Balanchine in which he tells how the ballet came to be created, remarking: "I was still a young man, and my choreography was considered too acrobatic, shocking, outrageously physical and against the classical dance. However, when I revived it for the New York City Ballet Company, in February, 1950, it was taken as an historic work, and it has remained in the repertoire ever since. I still think the adagio of the second scene is one of my most effective pieces of duo-composition."

Lichine's version for the de Basil Company, first seen here after the war in 1947 at Covent Garden, had considerable merits, but it was not until New York City Ballet brought us their revival of Balanchine's original choreography in Rouault's beautiful sets that the present generation of ballet-goers had the chance of fully appreciating the work's wonderful unity and depth.

Prokofiev's music perhaps sounds even more fascinating nowadays, when listened to in retrospect, than it must have seemed to the audiences of 1928, still accustomed to thinking of him as an anarchistic *enfant terrible*. There are strong traces still of the rumbustiously dynamic style of the earlier *Le Pas d'Acier* and *Le Chout*, but the music's poignant lyricism and intensity of feeling were something new for Prokofiev and anticipate, as do several of the actual themes, the later *Romeo and Juliet*.

Though Barzin does not make as much of the marvellous score as he might have, the performance on this well-engineered recording is nevertheless an extremely good one, and, in the absence of any other version, can be strongly recommended.

Two Fokine Ballets

Stravinsky: *Petrushka*. *The Firebird* Suite. Paris Conservatoire Orchestra (Pierre Monteux). RCA RB16047. 12in. 39*s*. 11½*d*. *Petrushka*. Philharmonia Orchestra (Efrem Kurtz). HMV ALP1503. 12in. 41*s*. 8½*d*.

MONTEUX follows up his recording of *Le Sacre* with one of *Petrushka*, of which, as with *Le Sacre*, he gave the first performance. Room has also been found on the record for six of the movements from *The Firebird* (first performed under Gabriel Pierné)—Stravinsky's Second Suite of 1919, to be more precise.

Monteux, of course, knows all there is to know about *Petrushka*, but his full-blooded reading is here a little marred by some occasional sluggishness of rhythm, while the Paris Conservatoire's playing is not always as polished and certain of intonation as is the case with the Philharmonia's under Kurtz.

The HMV *Petrushka* is in every way a remarkable record, at least the equal of the magnificent Dorati version on Mercury. Kurtz uses Stravinsky's revised version of 1947 for a slightly smaller orchestra than the 1911 original scoring, favoured by both Dorati and Monteux. The performance is masterly, the recording as brilliant as the earlier Mercury, but even more spacious and full.

Monteux's RCA recording has plenty of range and colour, if not all the delicacy of the HMV. The *Firebird* excerpts go well enough, though here the want of subtlety and refinement in the playing is more noticeable than in the *Petrushka*.

The Germans Excel

Delibes: *Sylvia—Prelude; Les Chasseresses; Valse Lente; Pizzicati; Cortège de Bacchus. Coppélia—Prelude; Mazurka; Valse; Thème Slave Varié; Czardas*. Gounod: *Faust—Walpurgisnacht* Ballet. Lamoureux Orchestra, Paris Opéra Orchestra (Jean Fournet). Philips SBL5203. 12in. 33*s*. 8½*d*. Delibes: *Sylvia—Prelude; Les Chasseresses; Valse Lente; Pizzicati; Cortège de Bacchus*. Gounod: *Faust—Walpurgisnacht* Ballet; Waltz. Munich Philharmonic Orchestra (Fritz Lehmann). Deutsche Grammophon DGM19026. 12in. 41*s*. 9*d*.

ON these records Delibes and Gounod receive, curiously, much more sensitive treatment at the hands of the German orchestra and conductor than from their own compatriots. The splendour of the Munich Philharmonic's playing is something we hear all too rarely in this type of music, and by comparison the French performances, with their braying horns and saxophoney woodwind, often sound brashly and unconcernedly second-rate.

The recordings match the performances: the DGG wonderfully sumptuous and silky, the Philips bright but a trifle tinny and not always secure in pitch.

A *Boutique* from Israel

Rossini-Respighi: *La Boutique Fantasque*. Dukas: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Georg Solti). Decca LXT5341. 12in. 39*s*. 11½*d*.

THIS new Decca *Boutique* is the first version to offer serious competition to the same company's famous Ansermet recording, which has so far successfully maintained its lead against all comers since it first appeared more than six years ago. For one thing, whereas Ansermet abbreviated and in some cases omitted altogether sections which correspond in the ballet to the mime passages between the actual dances, the new performance is absolutely complete. Though none of this additional material is of any great importance in itself, it is no less enchantingly orchestrated than the rest, and it does give an appreciable gain in continuity.

With the exception of the *Galop*, taken at a strangely leisurely pace, the Israel Philharmonic's performance is spirited and captures the tingling gaiety of the music most delightfully, if not quite so magically as the Ansermet. Also some of the Israel Philharmonic's playing is not as polished as the LSO's on the older version. But the recording is even more brilliantly colourful than before, and there is the whole of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* as a generous fill-up. Those who want every scrap of *Boutique* will be well pleased; but owners of the Ansermet version will not need my advice not to part with it.

What YOU Think

Letters to the Editor should be as short as possible

Decor for Edinburgh

SIR: I was naturally gratified to read your October Editorial and I hasten to curb your doubts—very properly expressed—about décor at the Edinburgh Festival.

After a series of discussions with the Festival authorities, a suitably staggering sum of money was eventually offered, and having discussed the matter with my various departmental directors we arrived at an overall plan for the presentation. We all agreed that the most important consideration was that the artists should not be requested to work for less than their fair and proper pay just because it was a festival. This to apply generally to choreographers for creating a work, and for musicians for writing original music. To pay such salaries obviously makes serious inroads into any available funds, however vast!

As the ballets were to be of approximately twenty minutes duration, each employing at an absolute maximum fourteen dancers, they were obviously not intended to be works on what one might call the *Sleeping Beauty* scale. In consultation we decided on the following:

To provide a most comprehensive lighting system, and to augment, if not to dispense with, the existing arrangements at the Empire Theatre. To provide on the stage a complete set of blacks, a complete set of greys, a blue sky cloth, and two gauzes. Beyond this a sum of something between £100 and £200 is available for décor. At the time of writing this should be ample to provide, for anyone who wishes to have it, a painted backcloth with which it would be possible to use either black or grey wings. Conversely using either a black, grey, or blue back, there is ample money to provide for ordinary cut-out scenery.

Regarding costumes, the company will be equipped, in any event, with black leotards and maybe pairs in other colours as well. Blue jeans and fisherknit sweaters are available at a very moderate price, and it is anticipated that human ingenuity and various hire firms may cover any other eventualities. **Michael Frostick**

89 Wigmore Street, London, W.1

Not worthy of the title

SIR: So the Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet) was not ready to be criticised. While I agree with your remarks on this subject, I should like to say that it was not only the inexperienced dancers who were at fault.

During the Company's week at Golders Green I witnessed a matinee performance of *Giselle* which I would not have believed possible from any National Company.

The lighting was appalling, the make-up (with a few exceptions) likewise, and the *tempi* erratic. Such little atmosphere as may have been created was dispelled in the final episode when a pair of hands appeared from behind the cross to catch Giselle.

Mr. Field (the Company's Director), smiling benevolently round the auditorium, was apparently very pleased with the performance, but if this unprofessional performance is typical of the productions shown to the provinces, it is a very sorry state of affairs.

20 *Palace Road,* **Jean Dicker**
Bounds Green, London, N.11

This is the first of many letters received in connection with the editorial in the November issue of DANCE AND DANCERS, *several of which are to be published next month. In the meantime the company has recently been advertised in the provincial press, during its tour, as just The Royal Ballet without even the addition of "formerly the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet"*—EDITOR.

So You Want to Dance?

The Ruth French School

Schools and Teachers
by E. C. MASON

WHAT a career she has had! And what a significant rôle she has played in the development of British ballet! Equally well-known, and well loved, in the ballet circles of Britain, America and Australasia, there are few other dancers or teachers who can claim to have travelled three times round the world.

She studied with Sacha Goudin, Serge Morosoff and Nicholas Legat. By the time she was 17 she was principal dancer at the London Hippodrome. While she was in her early twenties she joined the Pavlova Company as second ballerina. Although this was Pavlova's last world tour, it was Ruth French's first, and it took her to South America, Egypt, India, Java, Malaya and Australia.

In 1933 she followed Markova as guest artist with the Vic-Wells Ballet, when Tuesday night performances only were given. She danced leading rôles in such works at *Coppélia, Féte Polonaise* and *Casse Noisette*, and her partners included Robert Helpmann and Harold Turner.

Although she opened her first studio in Baker Street in 1925—this was before she danced with Pavlova—there have been few weeks in her life since her touring days when she has not been either teaching or examining. Since 1934 she has been closely connected with the Royal Academy of Dancing, and is a member of its Executive Committee. In the capacity of an examiner for that body she had also, at one time, two and a half years of consecutive examining overseas, embracing two more world tours. Pages of the notes she has made of her tours read only a little less sensationally than pages of Jules Verne. During her 1948 tour of New Zealand and Australia, she examined 3,741 candidates and travelled 22,714 miles by plane and ship from the time she left New Zealand, journeyed through Australia and arrived back in England.

In the Pavlova Company she appeared in the following works: *Vision*, the Blue Bird *pas de deux*, *Don Quixote* (a condensed version with choreography by Novikov in which she danced the rôle of Cupid), and in *Ballet Egyptienne*. In this work her partner was Edouard Borovansky, and the dance which Clustine had arranged for them was one of the highlights of the ballet. Although she has enduring admiration for Pavlova, she has not become one of those teachers who think that ballet itself reached its zenith with that great artist, and that the best we can do today is to struggle to maintain that standard.

Ruth French has certainly served British ballet well, for her work as an examiner has done much to raise the standards of tuition and performance throughout the Commonwealth. Moreover, at recent examinations she has judged such dancers at Merle Park, Patricia Dyer, Dianne Richards and Brenda Bolton—that is, of course, before they came here to become prominent dancers in English companies.

Now she is busy transmitting the fruits of her knowledge and experience to enthusiastic young pupils at her Bayswater studio. Of these, who come from all over the world, there are at this moment students from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United States, and even from countries we do not associate with classical ballet, such as Iceland, Mexico and Greece. Among past students there have been many celebrated names, and since she opened her school in 1951, a steady stream of pupils have been accepted by both the Royal Ballet School and the principal ballet companies.

Photo: Yvonne
RUTH FRENCH

A great many visitors are teachers from abroad who require refresher courses and a great many of her own pupils eventually become teachers themselves. She taught the very first RAD Syllabus Class at the Royal Ballet School, when it was known as the Sadler's Wells Ballet School and at the Sadler's Wells Theatre.

Reading through her notes, made while travelling thousands of miles a week as an examiner, I came across the following passage, written in 1948 at Townsville, Queensland. "My hotel was on the sea front and the rooms led out on to a balcony. Before going to bed I wandered out into the cool air, and my thoughts took me back just 19 years—to the day when I first set foot in Australia with Pavlova and her company." Today she best remembers that exquisite artist, Anna Pavlova, for her great ability not only to inspire her dancers, but to develop their personalities and encourage them to improve their minds.

No dancer, says Ruth French, can ever reach real greatness without a knowledge of the arts allied to dance and, on the other hand, she concludes, no child is, of course, ever hurt in after life by gaining a cultural background, even if he or she never becomes a professional dancer.

Ruth French teaches both juniors and seniors; seven being the youngest age for enrolment. In conjunction with Felix Demery, she has written the following textbooks on classical ballet technique: *First Steps in Ballet, Intermediate Steps* and *Advanced Steps*, the first of which was published in 1934. Her studio address is Church House, Queensborough Terrace, and it is close to Queensway and Bayswater stations.

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New Books for Christmas

Dame Ninette writes her life

Come Dance with Me, a memoir by Ninette de Valois (Hamish Hamilton, 25*s*.)

"NEVER write a book," declared Dame Ninette most emphatically several years ago at a Savoy dinner. She went on to say that anything written in newspapers was soon forgotten and generally used to wrap up the fish, but that anything written in a book was there forever and quoted against you. Even in those days she had written one book, *Invitation to the Ballet*. Now she has written another and she has not heeded her own wise words. I would add to her original statement and say that if you must write a book don't bring it out in fragmentary instalments in a national weekly. Reading these excerpts before getting down to the book made unfortunate sabbatical reading. The early parts of which read like a document from Nancy Mitford's poor Irish cousin; the other parts were just dull. However, as soon as it all appeared in book form everything fell into its right place, which possibly proves that Dame Ninette was wrong in the first place.

The trouble with an autobiography from someone of Dame Ninette's standing is that so much of the spice has perforce to be left out, and as she is a lady who is most unlikely to sit down in retirement I suppose we shall never get the book from her that we *all* want to read. The saga of this remarkable person, brought up in the shadow of the Wicklow Hills and her progress via Earls Court, Bloomsbury, Waterloo Road and Rosebery Avenue to Bow Street, brings many characters to life, although they are sketched in but briefly. I loved the story of Constant Lambert throwing chairs out to sea on an Irish Channel crossing, and how he obligingly played the son, Willie, to Helpmann's imitation of a North Country mother "spoilt by the war" during the Sadler's Wells interminable wartime train journeys. Again, how clearly she defines the character of Sophie Fedorovitch, who declared that ". . . it is nothing," as the bombs fell during the blitz. She was, I thought, a bit governessy about leaving parties early during the Diaghilev days because they tended to get rather "Russian." Had she stayed I cannot help wondering how much the course of British ballet might have been altered.

Like in almost every other book of this kind, it is the early struggling years that make the most interesting reading, and few people have written with such warm humour and genuine affection about Lilian Baylis without whose courage and foresight the Royal Ballet would possibly not have existed. No, I am wrong, it would have existed because all through Dame Ninette herself shows such a singleness of purpose, with her bright weather-eye always on some distant point, that it is hard to see how she could have failed to achieve what she originally set out to do. It would, perhaps, have been generous to have made a passing reference to Mrs. Laura Henderson, of Windmill Theatre fame, who first brought the Vic-Wells Ballet to central London and who financed the company's first provincial tour; also Marie Rambert, who supplied the Vic-Wells with so many artists ready made, is barely mentioned. These and so many more helped to lay the foundations of the remarkable structure that Dame Ninette has been responsible for raising.

When she has finally installed her company in the Covent Garden Opera House and led it on trans-American and other tours, the life goes out of her story possibly because she has been too busy to let any life into her own dedicated existence. But, of course, you must read this volume and buy it, too, because with her typical avoidance of personal gain Dame Ninette has donated the royalties to the Royal Ballet School. Anything she writes is of value to posterity as well as to the present generation, and anyway it is fun to read between the lines and fill in the gaps which, because of her diplomatic nature, she has been obliged to leave out.

P.W

Hardy Annuals

The Ballet Annual 12. Edited by Arnold L. Haskell (A. & C. Black, 25*s*.)
Ballet 7. Photographs by Serge Lido with a preface by Leonide Massine. (Art et Industrie, distributed in Britain by A. & C. Black, 2 *gns*.)

BALLET ANNUAL this year has, unlike Napoleon, gone to Moscow. It could almost be called a Bolshoi Special because the great majority of the pictures are of the Bolshoi and Stanislavsky companies from that city and very beautiful they are, too. In fact it amounts to an excellent photographic record of that distinguished visitor that so enlivened the autumn of 1956. But in addition to these photographs, the Soviet critic, Yuri Slonimsky, writes about the changes and the new forward-movement of the Russian companies, and Mary Skeaping, director of the Royal Swedish Ballet, tells of her experiences in both Moscow and Leningrad.

There are, of course, other events outside Russia, recorded in this volume, but somehow they rather lag behind like impoverished relations at a children's party. In unfortunate juxtaposition, a photograph of Peggy Van Praagh gloomily surveys the text of the Royal Charter and somehow that sums up the whole British year. But this does not mean

that *Ballet Annual* has not put its best foot forward because the photographs are beautifully arranged and reproduced, and there is plenty to read; it is only that the best foot forward has not, this year, fallen on British ground. It is, after all, the job of such publications to reflect the passing year, and in this respect they have succeeded most admirably.

SERGE LIDO's camera has this year been on a merry jaunt around Europe nosing in here and there. It has even found its way into the various ballet schools—those of the Royal Ballet, the Paris Opéra, La Scala, the Bolshoi—and they make the most unusual feature of this always decorative annual. There are some particularly lovely pictures of Royal Ballet artistes in Cranko's *The Prince of the Pagodas*, but the emphasis is naturally on French companies and visitors to Paris. There was a time when I got tired of pictures of dancers in alfresco settings, but as so many of them now spend the summer at festivals in the open-air this type of picture has come back into its own, and anyway Lido has developed a method of making his figures take on the character of their background. **P.W.**

Pocket Books with Cabin Trunk Content

A Dictionary of Ballet by G. B. L. Wilson. (Penguin Books, 5*s*.)

EVERYONE connected with ballet, whether actively or statically, has reason to be grateful to G. B. L. Wilson for the immense amount of trouble he has taken in compiling this mighty little atom. Dancers, ballets, steps, dance personalities of note are all here. Within a few moments of receiving my copy I found it to be a standard work that could never be very far from my side. The references to each person or subject are, of necessity, fairly brief, but they are long enough to tell you everything you should know. There are some technical drawings by Peter Revitt and a few photographs. Altogether the best five bob's worth for many years.

Andalusian Dances by Caballero Bonald. (Editorial Noguer, distributed in England by Barmerlea Book Sales, 12*s*. 6*d*.)

IT is strange that while the dance of Spain is enjoying enormous popularity all over the world, there are, apart from a great number of picure albums, few books on the subject. Bonald, in this book, is only concerned with the dancing in that vast burning slice of southern Spain known as Andalusia which is the home and incubator of flamenco. His main object has been to trace the sources and group the dances. Descriptions of the steps or indication of rhythm are not given, therefore the book can really only be regarded as a background to Andalusian dancing. There are a number of mistakes, possibly brought about by the poor translation, and there is a drawing of a *Zapateado* dancer which is bound to be misleading. The dancer has most undisciplined arms, whereas the correct position for the arms and hands in a *Zapateado* is quite rigidly in front of the body, as though holding the points of the jacket. On the other hand, there is a large portfolio of very fine photographs which do more to explain flamenco movement than any words could possibly achieve.

Pegasus by John Bowen, illustrated by Kenneth Rowell. (Faber & Faber, 12*s*. 6*d*.)

THE only reason for mentioning this book in a dance magazine is that it has been illustrated by an artist who has designed a number of distinguished ballets. Kenneth Rowell's drawings of the winged horse, who became a farm horse after he got tired of getting muddled up with guided missiles and artificial satellites, are quite delightful. The book and its moral have suddenly become frighteningly topical, but that should not stop it from being popular with children of every age. **P.W.**

Mixed Bag of Ballet Stories

Come to the Ballet by Pigeon Crowle. (Faber, 15*s*.)

ONE cannot be quite certain at which target Pigeon Crowle has aimed *Come to the Ballet*. Because there is so little that is new in this collection of 11 scenarios, with details of music and costumes, it is not likely to appeal to the seasoned ballet-goer. Nevertheless, its limits are elastic. It should be most to the taste of older children who go to Covent Garden only occasionally, popular with the armchair lover of ballet, and a helpful primer to those newly introduced to the satisfactions of this art.

The introduction in which she describes how the component parts of a ballet fall into place is particularly good. But a disadvantage (from the writer's point of view, at least) is that in any collection of stories of the ballets, there will always be a number of works described for which the reader would prefer to substitute others. I will not suggest my alternatives, but in this case *Fancy Free* seems rather to be an intruder rubbing shoulders with greater and classical ballets. Moreover, it needs a *New Yorker* style to catch its atmosphere, and this the author does not possess.

But apart from this, the writing is of a high standard and marked by her usual honesty and simplicity of approach. Many flashes of genuine atmosphere are evoked, especially in *The Firebird* and *Cinderella*, which she brings very much to life. **E.C.M.**

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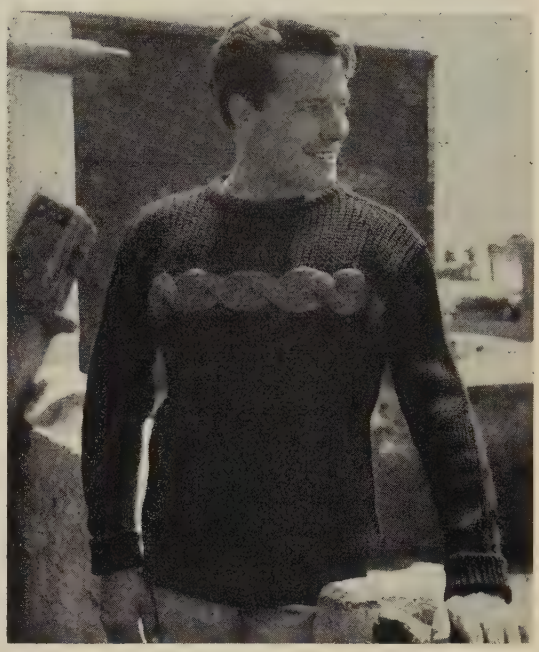

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SWANILDA'S DECEPTION: Nadia Nerina, disguised as the Coppélia doll, with Robert Helpmann, as Dr. Coppelius, in Act 2 of Margaret Dale's television Coppélia.

DRUGGED WINE: Coppelius (Helpmann) offers Franz (Donald Britton) a drink which causes the hapless boy to fall asleep. *Photos: B.B.C.*

A New Way with Old Stories

TELEVISION
Reviewed by E. C. MASON

THE MOOR'S PAVANE

Given on BBC Television on October 3. Choreography, José Limón. Music by Purcell, arranged by Simon Sadoff. Costumes by Pauline Lawrence. Produced by Margaret Dale.

The Moor	JOSÉ LIMÓN
His friend	LUCAS HOVING
His friend's wife	PAULINE KONER
The Moor's wife	BETTY JONES

HAVING suspected that *The Moor's Pavane*, so concentrated in style and plot and so small in cast, would be foolproof television material, I was disappointed by this tele-recording.

On the stage much emphasis is placed on formal groupings, on the pavane idea itself, and the plot develops within this framework. On television this was almost never apparent. Most of the time the cameras only followed the dancers half-way, so that what may, for example, have been a square formation, appeared as two dancers only, one in front of the other. The main flaw was that the dancers kept moving out of vision, especially during any comparatively fast movement, making the onlooker feel that he could be missing relevant sections of the dance.

On the other hand, many of the close-ups employed were remarkably effective. In fact, they could be said to have been almost too effective—the work's emphasis was shifted at times almost to the point where one felt the choreography had been rearranged for television.

One can only blame the appalling conditions under which all artists, from producer downwards, have to work in television, and be thankful that the programme was given at all. Nevertheless, if accepted for what it is—as a work much less effective than when seen live—this is a useful record of the Limón company in that it illustrates the vocabulary of movement used.

Of the four dancers, those who seemed closest to their own stage-selves were Limón himself and Pauline Koner.

COPPELIA

Given on BBC Television on October 27. The music recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra. Conductor, John Lanchbery. Designer, Guy Sheppard. Adapted and produced by Margaret Dale.

Dr. Coppelius	ROBERT HELPMANN
Swanilda	NADIA NERINA
Franz	DONALD BRITTON
Swanilda's friends	JUNE LESLEY, JOAN ELVIN, JOSEPHINE GORDON, NOEL ROSANNA

TWO of the most frightening events on television occurred in the same hour. In the first, the Director-General of the BBC assured us that no efforts would be spared to bring the world truly into our homes. "We (he said) are going to go much farther afield," and viewers were promised such delights as Foreign Ministers in conference and earth satellites being launched in the Pacific—in armchair comfort!

The second was *Coppélia*, in a new version, "freely adapted" by Margaret Dale, who was, I fear, just a little too free with her adaptation: the finished product bearing small resemblance to any production hitherto seen. Its worst feature was Guy Sheppard's décor. The first act set with its gates, posts and fences, cart-wheels, barrels and even cart-tracks, seemed to give the dancers a peculiar T-shaped stage on which to work. Not that it was badly designed, but it would have been more appropriate for something like *The Seagull*, *Peer Gynt*, or the first scene of *Eugéne Onegin*. While it could have been ideal for a folk-dance troupe, it was too realistic a background for *pointe* solos.

The thought that Margaret Dale had possibly been just a little too occupied with folk-dance ensembles were reinforced when one studied the changes she had made in the choreography. The best feature of the production was the arrangement of the *mazurka*. It was fresh and smacked of authenticity, and it was vigorously danced by a *corps* from whom occasionally emerged Peter Wright and Julia Farron to add distinction to its choreography. But its very excellence only tended to bring into relief the distracting mixture of styles imprinted on the whole production.

One will wholeheartedly endorse any changes that improve a work. No doubt most of Margaret Dale's ideas appeared sound, or even alluring, on paper. In performance they worked out differently. One of her intentions appeared to be to make the mime passages more realistic and, therefore, presumably more acceptable to the non-ballet public. But realism is the least essential ingredient in a ballet such as *Coppélia*, and neither Nadia Nerina nor Donald Britton, dancers rather than actors, were able to help her much. Consequently the mime was of the rough and obvious type—hearty grins and occasional winks. Moreover, one was constantly irritated at so much danceable music going to waste, and some vague passages in which there was no dancing seemed to go on indefinitely. The result? The two acts seemed longer than the complete three.

Part of Swanilda's music was given to Franz. A quite valid change, but spoiled by the fact that the solo was badly danced and badly arranged. The various innovations in the first act seemed to reduce the plot to absurdity. The "ear of corn" passage never came across, the Swanilda appeared to have little dramatic relation to Franz.

Act 2 had more dramatic expression and purpose, and it was more conventional, but it lacked atmosphere. The embarrassingly shabby set seemed to be made of nothing more than shoddy drapes. Throughout the act a Spanish dancer in a droopy, not-quite-Spanish costume offended the eye. The technical side of the production was more satisfying, and there were a few striking effects, notably the silhouettes of Coppelius and Swanilda seen struggling through the balcony window.

Britton was a very ordinary Franz. Nerina seemed rather hard and lacking in charm in close-ups. Helpmann, whose mime was toned down for television, was more successful, and although he did not seem entirely at home at all times, his very mobile face proved a tremendous asset.

In every sense the production was a distracting mixture of styles—classical ballet mingled with authentic folk-dance and realistic touches. Margaret Dale could not have foreseen that her innovations would result in a rather cheap and boring version. On these terms of production Swanilda hardly seemed to fit into the ballet.

THE CHINESE CLASSICAL THEATRE

THE only way in which a critic can assess the qualities of an art about which he knows very little is by comparison. The Classical Chinese Theatre from Formosa, which opened a three-week season at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on September 16, gave at least one excerpt that had previously been shown us by the Peking Opera at the Palace Theatre two years ago. Then it was called the *Fight in the Dark*; the new company calls it *The Wicked Inn-Keeper*, and they are virtually the same. The Formosa company played it almost in the dark; it therefore lost most of its point as it was impossible to see the finer details if they even existed. The Peking company played this in brilliant light, and in a marvellous way suggested a total blackout. Again the Monkey King, in an episode called *Outwitting the Water Monster* from the Formosa company, was a pallid character compared with the one we remember previously.

All of this naturally leads me to think that the new company has not the seasoned players of the company from Peking, though I may be entirely wrong. Nevertheless, the numbers new to the West have an enchantment that transports us to another world of generals (distinguished by the four flags on their backs), Kings (in yellow silk embroidered with dragons), Princesses (wearing long robes) and monsters (shown by a painting of the particular animal on the face or forehead). The fact that there were not any production numbers such as gliding lotus ladies and mass flag-waving makes me think that the Formosa company was not making too many concessions to the West. It all had a more genuine air about it.

The falsetto voice of the Chinese players takes, apparently, many years to perfect. It is certainly rather a strain on Western eardrums, though probably no more so than Italian opera would be on theirs. Quite a lot of this high-pitched squeaking went on, and the intonation did not always accord with the dignity of the bodily movements, though I know that if I had understood the meaning of the words, a parallel in the movement would have been discovered. Unfortunately these long passages of singing and talking slightly detracted from the enjoyment of the whole colourful spectacle. There was certainly no doubt about the visual beauty of it all. The stage would suddenly be filled with a whirling mass of figures dressed in an unbelievable assortment of silks and satins of varying colour and design, yet never for a moment was there a hint of garish vulgarity.

The vocabulary of the Chinese Theatre is vast and makes the 200 or so mimetic gestures of the classical ballet seem like a pocket book compared with the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. It was an excellent idea to print some of the meanings of these gestures and conventions in the programme, though hardly possible to digest them properly until after the performance. But in a number like *The Jade Bracelet*, in which a shy girl who sews and looks after chickens gains possession of a jade bracelet from a flirtatious student, the narrative was perfectly clear without any resorting to notes. A few more scenes like this and the one from the Peking company, when a young lady goes on a trip down the river with an old boatman, would have helped the present programme along.

Against black curtains and wings, and with very intelligent lighting, these stories and incidents emerged and dissolved as in a pipe dream. Again it was Peter Daubeny who brought this exotic entertainment to Europe.

P.W.

MARCEL MARCEAU FRENCH MIME CO.

IT is now over five years since I first fell under the spell of the mime Marcel Marceau. He came to London to give a short season at the Arts Theatre, where he was assisted by his partner Gilles Ségal. I went to the Arts Theatre expecting little enough, and instead of the mild boredom I anticipated I received one of the biggest theatrical shocks of my life. As I wrote at the time, my entire conception of mime was turned upside down.

Here was a great theatre art completely different from ballet and yet possessing many of ballet's finest qualities. The year following my first sight of Marceau, I was fortunate enough to see him again, on this occasion with his company, in Florence, and once again I was fascinated by his artistry. Now at long last he has brought his company to London for a month's season at the Cambridge Theatre, opening on October 14.

In some respects I found the Marceau performances as delightful as ever, but in other ways I was conscious of a slight feeling of disappointment. Admittedly, this must have been largely due to the impossibility of repeating the potent theatrical impact of surprise. It is always the unexpected revelation that is the most pleasurable. But even allowing for the lack of the sense of discovery, which undoubtedly heightened my reaction to his first season, I think that quite objectively his recent appearances were in sum total less effective and less uniquely satisfying than that remarkable London debut five years ago. And the reason for this comparative falling off is easy to pinpoint.

Marceau and his company gave two different programmes at the Cambridge, both of which followed a similar pattern, each containing within its framework two quite distinct elements. The first of these were the solos devised by Marceau himself, and his brilliant assistant Gilles Ségal. Basically these were the same as those with which they had previously conquered London, and they still seemed as effective as ever. The other element in each programme consisted of "mimodramas" by Marceau performed by his entire company of nine mimes, and these were quite frankly less successful.

Mime—at least in the hands of men like Marceau—is much more than dumb acting or slickly evocative gesture. It is a stylised form of movement hovering between acting and dancing in which, to use Marceau's own words, "a mime can come closest to identification with both human beings and inanimate objects, and express the most carefully hidden feelings." It is essentially the projection of character through movement. The difference between this art and the allied art of ballet is difficult to convey completely in words, yet is quite unmistakable in performance.

Although the comparison is inadequate, something of the difference can be indicated if mime is thought of as prose, and ballet as poetry. In the first the ultimate emphasis is on content with form frequently playing a relatively minor rôle, in the latter form and content are united in a single statement, The comparison can be pursued a little further because Marceau frequently employs a very poetic style of prose, and it is in these moments that his mime superficially becomes very much like ballet indeed.

A special quality of mime, found strongly in Marceau, is the "illusionist" aspect of the art, which directly derives from its unusually wholehearted stylisation. One aspect of its whole technique is aimed at persuading the audience to see what does not exist. Its conventions reduce scenery and props to a bare minimum, and then by a mesmeric sleight of hand create the illusion that they do *in reality* exist.

The significance of the italicised words can be seen by contrasting Marceau's sketch on skating with the ballet *Les Patineurs*. The ballet makes many allusions to skating, but no one could be fooled into thinking they were seeing an ice show. Marceau's mime on the other hand is aimed at producing just that illusion—he tries to actually make you see the skates. Because you know rationally that the skates cannot really be there, you give the same delighted but uneasy laugh with which you greet the conjuror's impossible rabbit coming out of the improbable hat. By an extension of the same method, Marceau peoples an empty stage with a vast variety of characters in a manner that recalls, as Peter Williams pointed out in his full review of the company's Monte Carlo season (DANCE AND DANCERS, March '57), the never-to-be-forgotten *diseuse* Ruth Draper.

Of course, these conjuring tricks aimed at the audience's suspension of disbelief represent only the top layer of Marceau's art. It may be these that evoke the oohs and ahs of the dazzled spectator, yet the essential quality of Marceau's artistry is the manner in which at a level deeper than mere technique he conveys character, and leaves his audience with the impression more of having seen a mirror held up to nature than of having witnessed a particularly ingenious variant of the three-card trick.

Marceau has created a person. His name is Bip, and Marceau once referred to him as "Charlie Chaplin's younger brother." The calm assumption of such a relationship is not arrogance on Marceau's part, because in his way Bip is as complete and wonderful a creation as Charlie's tramp.

Bip is you, me, us and everyman. He is the hero of the little people. His shambling failures show with unabashed pathos the everyday struggle of the individual against the machines. It is too tempting to soliloquise on him, so I must be content with saying that as a modern expression of our times I personally cannot think of any creation of the post-war theatre that measures up to him. My only regret is that his name is written in water, so that Bip will be forgotten when so many lesser figures, who have taken the necessary precaution of putting their signatures on the contemporary theatre in ink, will be recalled as typical of our age.

Although Marceau's other essays in style and technique are all brilliantly clever, it is with Bip that he sets his seal. Yet sometimes I had the impression that Bip was hanging round his master's neck with the unwelcome tenacity of the Old Man of the Sea. Marceau has thought very deeply about the art of mime and its nature. His ambitions have for years been centred on extending its boundaries, of making mime an art form with the same prestige and following as is enjoyed by, say, ballet.

He seems to be no more satisfied with Bip than Chaplin was with the Tramp, and like Chaplin must press forward into new territory. It is probably the same spirit that transformed Charlie the Tramp into Charles Chaplin the film director, writer, composer, etc., that has led Marceau to form his company of mimes and produce his "mimodramas."

These mimodramas, and the London season produced four of them, have many individual moments of creative excellence, but at the present stage cannot I feel be completely accepted as a satisfying art form. They bear some resemblance to a silent film (without, of

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course, sub-titles or the special advantages, like close-ups, peculiar to the cinema), and appear to do nothing which either legitimate drama or ballet could not do better. *The Overcoat*, based on Gogol's short novel, lacked the directness that a straightforward theatre adaptation would possess. The apparently orientally inspired *Wolf of Tsu-Ki-Mi* suffered from an ingenious but incomprehensible story. *The 14th of July* and *The Pawnshop* were both subjects that could have been better treated by choreographers, although the latter, fully described earlier by Peter Williams, does show splendid imagination and certainly gets far nearer than its companions to indicating the possibilities of mimodramas. In this the sense of fantasy that pervades all Marceau's work, and the exceptionally original use of flashback (the use of time as an extra "dimension" in his mime studies is something individual—although choreographers like Tudor have used time in a somewhat similar fashion) do combine to give the work a certain justification of its own.

Marceau could well reply that his explorations into the mimodrama are still only in a preliminary stage. This may be so, and perhaps in the future Marceau will produce work of great importance using this form. Yet I must say that at the present time I cannot help feeling that his talents are best shown in the recital style of programme in which we first made his acquaintance.

This must not be taken as an adverse comment on the company which he has gathered together. Naturally enough, apart from himself the outstanding artist is Ségal. Ségal has developed greatly in the past few years and really deserves considerable comment on his own account. His mime technique varies slightly from Marceau's, and he has made a speciality of studies involving more than one plane of action. His sketch in flashback *The Letter* was one of the delights of the season.

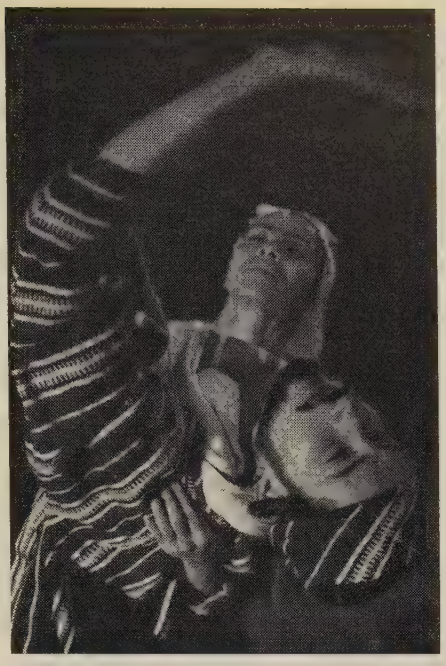
Other outstanding mimes with the company include Pierre Verray, Gilles Leger and André Gaillard.

Also beyond all the actual pleasures Marceau and his company provided during the season rests the salutary lesson he has to teach our ballet companies, merely by showing the potentialities of mime as a living art.

Clive Barnes

INBAL

DRURY LANE, before it is again taken over by America and the musical *My Fair Lady* next spring, is showing us the world of dance almost as varied and far-flung as the countries crossed by Phineas Fogg in his 80-day global perambulation. The first company from the Middle East, The National Ballet and Dance Theatre of Israel, opened there on October 21.



PEACE ON SUNDAY: Margalith Oved and Meir Ovadia, of Inbal, in Shabbat Shalom. *This beautiful* pas de deux, *about the serenity of married love, was one of the best numbers given during the Drury Lane season.*
Photo: Maria Austria

The Yemenites, whose dance art forms the basis of this company's repertoire, have been isolated in the south-western corner of the Arabian Peninsular for 2,500 years; recently they were repatriated to Israel. After having seen their present programme, I am rather uncertain in my mind as to whether the Yemenites have been hiding the Modern Dance from the rest of the world for 2,500 years or if New York's Anna Sokolow, announced in the programme as having given the company help and encouragement, has brought certain American influences to bear. It was certainly remarkable to see how many of the leaps and contractions of these Israeli dancers bore a resemblance to some of the movements of Limón, Doris Humphrey and even Jack Cole. At another moment in the folk dances from *Israeli Suite*, the male dancers got nicely into "Kolo" formation with their leader waving a handkerchief just as we have seen from various Balkan folklore groups.

It is, of course, perfectly possible that these are all quite genuine features of the Yemenite dance because the basic ingredients of folk dance all over the world are fairly similar. If this is so, it is high time that the word "Modern" was removed from the Modern Dance.

The company of 18 was hardly large enough to make an overwhelming impression in the vast spaces of the Drury Lane Theatre; in a smaller theatre it would have created a far greater impact. Several of the smaller numbers such as the beautiful *Shabbat Shalom pas de deux* got rather lost.

All the dancers brought great enthusiasm to their work, and the bearded males were extremely virile but in certain numbers, which had a narrative and needed characterisation, there was a lack of subtle inflection. Of these major items—*The Yemenite Wedding, Song of Deborah* and *The Queen of Sheba*—the first was undoubtedly the best in that it reflected something of the real life and customs of the Israeli people. In spite of the witty introduction, given by Nathan Cogan with almost the charm that Nikita Balieff used to introduce the Chauve Souris, the *Song of Deborah* was rather confused. It tried to tell too much with rather limited means. In the final number the Queen of Sheba danced before King Solomon in much the same way that some princesses danced in the last scene of the musical version of *Kismet*. In her striped yellow and black costume she seemed rather like a pugnacious wasp. There was a certain amount of real humour in this encounter with the wise King and the visiting Queen, and I liked the way the King's scribes, who, like biblical reporters, took notes of the general proceedings.

The settings were of the simplest kind and mainly consisted of stylised skeletal ornament against black curtains or a blue sky-cloth. The costumes had a certain monotony and I felt that more use could have been made of the interesting drab colours of the striped garments.

This is a young company, and the last thing that I wish to do is to in any way dampen their ardour, but I cannot help thinking that it would have been wiser for the company to have matured in Israel for several more years before facing-up to a European audience. Greater schooling and attention to production details and the general requirements of the theatre would give the whole spectacle a more professional air.

P.W.

Dance and Dancers . . . ABROAD

AMERICA

THE ROYAL BALLET IN NEW YORK

AS we go to press, the Royal Ballet has completed almost half of its transcontinental tour, and is breaking its previous box-office records in all the major cities. Partially, of course, this is due to the fact that the company is being presented at slightly higher box-office prices than when it was here in 1955. Mainly, however, their great success, both artistically and financially, is due to the fact that the company is at the top of its form, and has never appeared to greater advantage in America.

This is especially interesting when one considers the changes that have taken place in the company since it first appeared here in 1949. Of those who came over in 1949 there are only 16 left. Among the missing are Robert Helpmann, Moira Shearer, Pamela May, Beryl Grey, Violetta Elvin, Harold Turner, Margaret Dale, Pauline Clayden, June Brae, Anne Negus, Gillian Lynne, Avril Navarre, Lorna Mossford, Palma Nye, Anne Heaton, John Field, Richard Ellis and Henry Legerton, among the principals. John Hart, meanwhile, has become Ballet Master. From the original *corps* seen here in 1949, Rowena Jackson has become a ballerina, Valerie Taylor a featured soloist and only Dorothea Zaymes remains where she was eight years ago. Since 1949 Philip Chatfield has emerged from the male *corps* to become the second most important male dancer in the company; Brian Ashbridge and Douglas Steuart are now soloists and two other young men, John Cranko and Kenneth MacMillan, are now choreographers to the Royal Ballet. On the other hand, there are 58 (roughly 75 per cent) dancers new to the company since 1949. Certainly many of the missing stars and soloists have left a void.

Eight years after its first visit, however, the Royal Ballet glitters as it never has before. To begin with, the girls in the *corps* not only dance better but (quite importantly, too) are considerably more beautiful. The male wing of the company is markedly stronger, and this holds true all the way from the *corps* to the top. Fonteyn, of course, remains the pinnacle, dancing still more gloriously than ever. However, Svetlana Beriosova and Rowena Jackson each show tremendous advance since 1955 and have won increased followings in New York this season. Likewise noteworthy have been the marked artistic growth and technical facility of Pirmin Trecu and David Blair. Nor is Graham Usher to be overlooked, for in one matinee performance as the Bluebird he gave evidence of a most exciting future ahead for

him. In other words, the company as a whole was dancing better, seemed more balanced and certainly full of more promise in its younger members than ever before.

THE *Prince of the Pagodas*, by John Cranko, was the major success of the remainder of the season, though it drew contradictory opinions from John Martin in the *New York Times* and Walter Terry in the *New York Herald-Tribune*. Terry, quite rightly, hailed it as "an instant and certain success with American audiences," while Martin noted that "the result is pretty ineffectual all around." As a matter of record, Martin went considerably further and devoted a full Sunday column castigating the ballet.

JUST as nearly all of Frederick Ashton's ballets have been popular in America, so have John Cranko's works been admired here. In the case of Cranko, this began when his first works were seen here in the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet repertory in 1952. *The Lady and the Fool* did much to further enhance his reputation 1955 (as did *Cranks* in 1956) and, quite naturally, this was even more apparent in the case of his new full-length ballet. Certainly *The Prince of the Pagodas* was far and away the major work produced during the latter part of the season. Here, certainly, was invention and creativity and a magnificent use of the individual dancers. Capacity audiences at each of its New York showings gave it ovations, and only the lack of space permits an extensive examination of this magnificent work, which has already been fully reviewed after its London première in the February issue. Though Desmond Heely's visually arresting costumes were not completely at home against John Piper's settings, Britten's score was much admired, as was the glowing performance by Svetlana Beriosova.

FREDERICK ASHTON'S *La Péri* and Kenneth MacMillan's *Solitaire* and *Noctambules* unfortunately did not live up to their advance reputations. In the case of *La Péri* one felt that this 26-year-old ballet was in no wise comparable to other of Ashton's distinguished works of previous periods. Granted that it still might take fire with Markova in the rôle that was originally created for her, in its present version it seemed dated and decorative.

MacMillan's two ballets were an even greater disappointment. *Solitaire*, which would probably be a pleasant minor ballet for a less important company on a smaller stage, simply did not come across. One could not become seriously interested in its central character, though Anya Linden danced it beautifully, and its stop-and-go patterns got nowhere and achieved no result. *Noctambules*, on the other hand, had a glorious set by Nicholas Georgiadis with a sophomoric scenario on the part of the choreographer. One of the lasting proofs of any ballet is how many times a viewer cares to see it, and here its story was told in such a manner that there was nothing left to savour, study or enjoy in seeing it again. Like most dances in the commercial Broadway theatre, this ballet makes its total effect in one viewing. Since both *Winter's Eve* and *Journey*, two ballets mounted by MacMillan for Ballet Theatre, were similarly inventive on the surface only, this young man must continue to remain in our minds as one of Britain's most promising choreographers.

THE BLACK WATCH IN AMERICA: Highland dancers of the Black Watch in the Argyle Broadswords. *They are rehearsing for their enormously successful tour of the States.*

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON

THE emergence of Philip Chatfield as a leading male dancer of the first magnitude with particularly noteworthy performances in *Coppélia*, *The Prince of the Pagodas* and *Swan Lake* . . . Svetlana Beriosova, who, by the end of the season, was much less aloof and danced gloriously, particularly in *Coppélia* and *Birthday Offering* . . . Rowena Jackson, who finally came in for her rightful share of praise as a ballerina, dancing with beauty and authority . . . Alexander Grant in *Façade* . . . The regal carriage and superb partnering that we have always come to expect from Michael Somes . . . Nadia Nerina's vivid and exciting performance as *The Firebird* . . . Effervescent Maryon Lane in *Solitaire* . . . Julia Farron, who, as always, was notable in everything in which she appeared (she, surely, is one of the pillars of the company) . . . Pirmin Trecu, particularly in the Florestan variation in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and last, but by no means least, Brian Shaw as the Bluebird in the same ballet. Shaw won a deserved ovation from both the Gala Première and the even more enthusiastic closing night audience.

BLACK WATCH DANCERS

IMPRESARIO Sol Hurok, in addition to returning the Royal Ballet to America, has also been responsible for the importation of a perfectly magnificent group of dancers, pipers and the regimental band of the Black Watch, Royal Highland Regiment. This military organisation played to three completely sold-out performances at New York's Madison Square Garden early in October. They were received so well by the critics and the public that Hurok is bringing the group back for two additional performances early in December before they return home.

Most interesting, of course, from a dance point of view were the Scottish dances. Particularly outstanding was *The Argyle Broadswords* in which eight young men executed these highly complicated figures with great style, discipline and virility.

SHANTO RAO

SHANTA RAO, today's most distinguished dancing ambassador from India, has achieved a great artistic success in New York City, particularly with her own dances. Presented in New York under the auspices of Roger L. Stevens, with the approval of the Government of India, in co-operation with the American National Theatre and Academy, and with the assistance of the Asia Foundation, this gifted young dancer illustrated the universality of dance. Aside from being beautiful in appearance, she has a remarkably broad range of dance movement. As a pure dance technician she is superb, but there is much more to her art than this. There is also a wonderful sense of communication. One can only hope that Shanta Rao and her company will return to New York again soon and often.

BALLET THEATRE WORKSHOP

DURING January Ballet Theatre plans to present two programmes highlighting the Ballet Theatre Workshop in which five young American choreographers will be represented. The choreographers now working on new ballets for these performances include William Dollar, Herbert Ross, Matte Mattox, Peter Gennaro and Donald Saddler.

After the outstanding success of last May's Ballet Theatre Workshop productions at the

Phoenix Theatre, Artistic Director Lucia Chase has developed a further means of bringing new ballets to life. This season ballets are being produced in three stages. First they are being developed and tried out at the Ballet Theatre school. Secondly, works that prove of merit will be shown to invited audiences such as those at the Phoenix Theatre in January. Thirdly, works that pass through these two stages successfully then will be considered for inclusion in Ballet Theatre's repertory.

IN BRIEF

MARTHA GRAHAM'S 30-minute film, *A Dancer's World*, reviewed in our October issue, has been chosen for a nation-wide television showing on the new programme, *The Seven Lively Arts*. Graham's film will appear on the same programme as two documentary films on Picasso and Stravinsky. . . . Agnes de Mille has been signed to stage the dances for *Goldilocks*, the new musical production based on the silent film era. This musical is expected in New York in late February or early March. . . . Zachary Solov, chief choreographer for the Metropolitan Opera Company, has been engaged to stage the dances for *The Captain's Paradise*, his first such assignment on Broadway. . . . Robert Fosse has replaced Anna Sokolow as choreographer for the new musical, *Copper and Brass*. . . . Dania Krupska has replaced John Heawood as choreographer for *The Carefree Heart*. Heawood, nevertheless, continues as one of the busiest young choreographers in New York. He has staged the dances for the off-Broadway production of *Conversation Piece* as well as for the intimate new nightclub revue, *Take Five*, at the Downstairs Club. . . . Hanya Holm, noted American choreographer, is now in London where she is staging the dances for *Where's Charlie?* starring Norman Wisdom. She remains in London to start work on reproducing her dances for *My Fair Lady*. . . . Les Ballets Janine Charrat de France, headed by the distinguished French dancer and choreographer Janine Charrat, is making its first American tour. Charrat's company includes Josette Clavier, Juan Giuliano, Heino Hallhuber and Hélène Trailine. **Arthur Todd**

FRANCE

BALLETS 57 DE PARIS

THE Ballets 57 de Paris, created by Milorad Miskovitch and Irène Lidova, appeared at the Théâtre Marigny in October. Seldom has the enthusiasm for ballet been so fervent, but as its financial costs have never been so heavy, it is therefore almost paradoxical that a company should be formed at this time. One can only applaud the courage and audacity which have prompted these young dancers to form, without assistance, a company on the spur of the moment when one after another their predecessors have all disbanded. Although all of its ballets have by no means been equally successful, the sincerity of this young company merits interest and deserves full support.

Composed of only eight dancers, its choreographers have had to confine themselves to this number, but its repertoire shows that the group is not committed in any way, either to giving a particular type of ballet or, least of all, to the creations of a particular choreographer. Going from the classicism of John Taras to the *avant-garde* of Maurice Béjart, the repertoire's appeal also depends in turn on the works of George Skibine, Dick Sanders, and Milko Sparemblek; not to overlook the ballets created by Lifar, Charrat, Walter Gore and William Dollar, although these were not given this season. Such eclecticism indicates a genuine understanding of dance rather than a lack of character. The classicism of the artists, particularly of Miskovitch, immediately imprinted a style on the company, although this style was naturally very diversely served by so varied a repertoire.

BALINESE STARS: The famous Mario, one of the greatest male dancers of Bali, with one of the youngest dancers in the company, Ni Ketut Witi, who is only 9 years old. The Ballet of Bali recently appeared in Paris on their way to America. They return to Europe next year. *Photo: Lido*

LE RIDEAU ROUGE was reviewed by Peter Williams when it was premiered at Monte Carlo: *Quatuor*, *L'Echelle* and *Prométhée* were also commented upon. I will therefore not give lengthy descriptions of any of these works.

Taras has designed *Le Rideau rouge* to display in the most attractive manner the varied talents of the young dancers, and it has been costumed in excellent taste by André Levasseur, who has also provided a quiet but appropriate décor. Irène Skorik takes the principal rôle, and she is particularly distinguished in her *variation*. In a smaller rôle, one could not avoid appreciating the vivacity and gaiety of Marie-Claire Carriè, although her talents are more suited to comedy and to the lighter rather than dramatic ballet—nevertheless this newcomer has a most promising freshness and we are sure to see more of her in the future. Judith Dornys, Milko Sparemblek and Vassili Sulitch provided a well-disciplined background for Miskovitch. Richard Blareau's score rather suggested a style of music dear to the ballerinas of the last century—that is to say it is danceable rather than inspiring, some parts of it being rather weak.

L'ECHELLE by Dick Sanders boldy follows the line of dramatic neo-realism. Although the choreographer has worked beside Maurice Béjart, his talents nevertheless differ. The theme of *L'Echelle*, supplied by Milko Sparemblek, is similar to that of the Japanese film *Rashomon*. In a deserted timber-yard a murder has been committed. Each character in turn gives his version of the crime. The theme as used by Dick Sanders is a triple narrative, delicate and difficult to interpret, and it must be said that each character is not always as clearly drawn as could be desired. Nevertheless, he has used with great dexterity a mixture of academic, acrobatic and expressive movement. Although certain pictures remain in the memory, the work essentially depends on its excellent interpreters. Véronika Mlakar was in turn frightened, gentle and sensuous, but always completely feminine. Vassili Sulitch added authority, and Milko Sparemblek, in a more subtle rôle, conveyed an anxiety completely in accord with such an enigmatic character. The atmosphere was brilliantly conveyed by François Ganeau's décor, in which only the most simple materials were used, cleverly lit.

PELLEAS ET MELISANDE, by Georges Skibine to Fauré's celebrated score, did not reach the standard expected from the creator of *Idylle*. The part of Golaud was too episodic, and Sulitch was in fact too young for it. The work is little more than an extended *grand pas de deux*, choreography being almost non-existent. Irène Skorik, in an exquisite

water-blue tunic designed by Pierre Cardin, was a fluid Mélisande, while Miskovitch was a radiant and romantic Pelleas.

RECEIVED with great enthusiasm at Lyons last year, *Prométhée* is a new version of the old legend, used in the distant past by Vigano and more recently by Lifar. In this work Maurice Béjart has not departed from his own particular nervous style of choreography, or from his preferences for certain poses such as the *plié* in second position. He has enclosed his central character in a mechanised and icy universe, in which classical myth and science-fiction are set side by side. In Béjart's hands, the hidden flame which brings the creature to life gives off a warmth more sensuous than spiritual. To its intellectual and erotic qualities so cleverly developed by the choreographer, Miscovitch as Prométhée adds a tragic nobility and an extra emotional dimension. His very interesting interpretation brings the ballet to life and is its principal interest. Supporting him, Véronika Mlakar and Judith Dornys faithfully depict the tormented designs of the choreography. The music by Ohana and the décor and costumes by Bernard Daydé were also in complete harmony with the work, although, concerning the latter, some rather unpleasant chin-bands must be mentioned.

IF John Taras's *pas de trois, Les Griffes,* displays little that is new in the way of choreography, *Quatour* by Milko Sparemblek must be regarded as a most interesting experiment. This first commendable attempt at choreography still shows a lack of cohesion and an over-use of *terre à terre* movement; faults, no doubt, which will be corrected in time. It was well danced by its creator, Véronika Mlakar, Judith Dornys and Vassili Sulitch.

BALLET OF BALI

LAST seen in 1953, this Indonesian group has returned, embellished and greatly improved by the presence of its indisputed leader, I Mario, dancer, choreographer and demonstrator. Unfortunately, it was at a tremendous disadvantage in an arena as vast and so devoid of atmosphere as the Théâtre du Palais de Chaillot. Despite the company's undeniable qualities, it cannot be said that the spectacle was magnificent, without adding reservations. But the entire blame rests on the exterior circumstances already mentioned.

Nevertheless, we were reintroduced with the same pleasure to the tiny princesses, wearing gold ornaments and crowned with flowers, with their arms undulating and delicate fragile grace. The most notable moments were *La Danse de l'abeille* and especially *L'Oiseau Noir* (Ni-Ketut-Witi) from *Les Adieux du Roi de Lasem,* the latter item being enduringly enchanting. Although he is by no means young I Mario still has an amazing suppleness and an unblemished authority, which he may perhaps ultimately bequeath to his most promising pupil, I Gusti Ngurah Raka. *La Danse des Kriss* showed a new aspect of Balinese art to be midway between India and China, a concentrated mixture of the sacred and profane. The strange beauty of the costumes was matched by the exotic music supplied by the gamelan orchestra from the Palace of Tabanan.

Marie-Françoise Christout

THE NUTCRACKER

continued from page 15

costumes by George Kirsta. These were subsequently amended in the course of time, as was the choreography. Among the choreographers who have at some time or other been associated with this version are Nicholas Beriosoff, Dolin, Markova, David Lichine, Grace Cone and Pilar Lopez. Despite the version's more than chequered career it has served as a frame for some distinguished performances, including its first cast, Markova and Dolin, and Nathalie Krassovska, Tatiana Riabouchinska, Yvette Chauviré, Mia Slavenska, Sonia Arova, Alexandra Danilova and Belinda Wright.

Many English companies have included Act 2 of the ballet in their repertories, notably the Ballet Rambert, who first gave the ballet, with décor by Harry Cordwell, during its Australian tour in 1948.

Three important Western versions of the ballet have not been seen in London. The first is that devised by Alexandre Benois and the choreographer Margarita Frohman at La Scala, Milan, in 1938, which incorporated many of Benois's ideas on the scenario. Another version was mounted at La Scala in December, 1956, with new choreography by Alfred Rodrigues, the principal rôles being taken by Fonteyn and Somes. James Bailey in his designs introduced a new prologue, and took his inspiration for the Kingdom of Snow from the landscape gardener Linderhoff, and for the Kingdom of Sweets from the court jeweller Fabergé.

The other significant revival of the ballet yet to be seen in London is George Balanchine's version for New York City Ballet, first given on February 2, 1954, with scenery by Horace Armistead, and costumes by Karinska. This production was based in part on Balanchine's memories of the ballet at the Maryinsky, where in 1919 as a student he danced the part of the Nutcracker in Gorsky's version. The principal dancers for City Ballet were Maria Tallchief and Nicholas Magallanes.

COVER STORY

This month's front cover, by Mike Davis, is of Natalie Krassovska, who has recently re-joined London's Festival Ballet as its ballerina.

NATALIE KRASSOVSKA is a third generation ballerina. Her grandmother was a soloist at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. Her mother, who died recently, was the beautiful Lydia Krassovska of the Diaghilev Ballet. Her father came from the old Scottish family of Leslie, and it was by this name that Natalie was known for many years with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo before the war.

Born in St. Petersburg, Krassovska first studied at the Russian gymnasia there. Later she studied under Preobrajenska in Paris. Her first appearance on the stage was with Nijinska's company in 1932, when she was seen by Serge Lifar. He asked her to tour with him in South America in 1934. Returning to Europe she joined Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and with that company she danced many important rôles. Going with the company to America at the beginning of the war, she took over most of the principal rôles and toured America for many years as its ballerina.

In 1949 she returned to Europe and appeared in England in concert performances and with Ballet Rambert. In 1950 she joined Festival Ballet when it started and remained with the company as its ballerina for six years. After concert tours of America and South America, and also with Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas, she returned to Festival Ballet as guest ballerina last summer. This autumn she came back to the company as its ballerina.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET
(formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)

Nov.
18 The Grand Theatre, Leeds
25 New Theatre, Hull

Tour programmes for each town.

Mon. *Les Sylphides, House of Birds, Pineapple Poll*
Tues. *Les Patineurs, La Fête Etrange, Blood Wedding*
Wed. *Les Sylphides, House of Birds, Pineapple Poll*
Thurs. *Solitaire, Giselle*
Fri. *Les Patineurs, La Fête Etrange, Blood Wedding*
Sat. (M & E) *Coppélia*

(NOTE: Whatever day the mid-week matinee falls on, the matinees and evening performances will then be *Solitaire* and *Giselle*; the announced programme will be substituted on Thursday.)

Dec.
26 The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
Dec.
26 (M) *Pineapple Poll, A Blue Rose* (world première), *The Angels* (world première)
26 (E) *Pineapple Poll, A Blue Rose, The Angels*
28 (M) *Veneziana* (revival), *A Blue Rose, The Angels*
Jan.
1 *Giselle* (Alexander, Bennett), *Pineapple Poll*
2 *Les Sylphides, The Burrow* (world première), *Veneziana*
8 *Les Sylphides, The Burrow, Veneziana*
10 *Veneziana, Giselle* (Heaton, Zolan)
15 *A Blue Rose, The Burrow, Pineapple Poll*
17 *Les Sylphides, The Angels, The Burrow, A Blue Rose*

FESTIVAL BALLET
Nov.
18 The Palace, Manchester (2 weeks)
Dec.
2 The Hippodrome, Brighton
24 The Royal Festival Hall, London (3 weeks). New production of *The Nutcracker*

BALLET RAMBERT
Dec.
9 The Arts Theatre, Cambridge
Jan.
13 Theatre Royal, York
20 Arts Council tour of Scotland (4 weeks)
Feb.
17 The Little Theatre, Middlesborough
24 Her Majestys, Carlisle
(These dates are subject to alteration.)

THE NATIONAL BALLET AND DANCE THEATRE OF ISRAEL
Provincial Tour
Nov.
25 The Opera House, Manchester
Dec.
2 The Grand Theatre, Leeds
9 The Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon
16 Gaiety Theatre, Dublin

THE URAL STATE ENSEMBLE
at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London
Nov. 11 for three weeks.

DANISH PANTOMIME BALLET
Dec.
2 Olympia Theatre, Dublin
9 Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham
18 (approx.) London Season. For theatre and dates see daily Press.

EXHIBITION
at the National Book League
7 Albemarle Street London W1
Four Centuries of Ballet Books.

DANCE LECTURE
at 17 Queensbury Mews West London SW1
Dec. 1 Doris Humphrey on Choreography (presented by the British Dance Notation Society)

NEXT MONTH
LOOK FOR
JOHN GILPIN & MARILYN BURR in *The Nutcracker*

on the front cover of the January issue of DANCE AND DANCERS.
INSIDE: BALLET RAMBERT IN CHINA, a portfolio of pictures taken during the recent tour. New ballets at the PARIS OPERA, reviews and pictures of *La Dame a la Licorne* and *Chemin de Lumière*. Recent creations from the ROYAL DANISH BALLET by Bent Schonberg together with new photographs. Ballet Perspectives—*La Fête Etrange*. Accent on the male—JOHN GILPIN. All the regular features and many of immediate topical interest.
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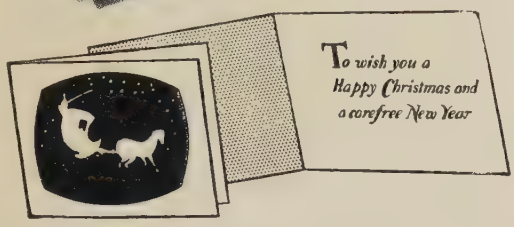

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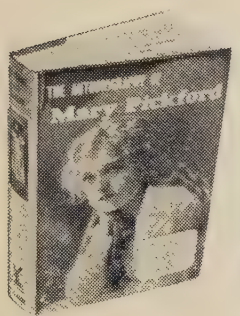

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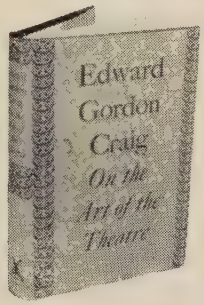

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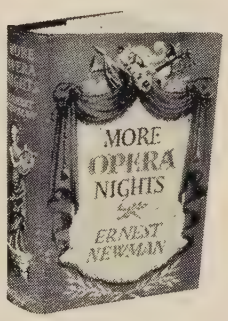

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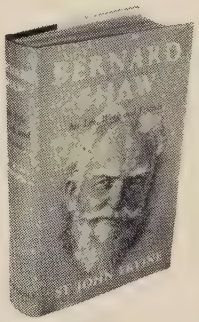

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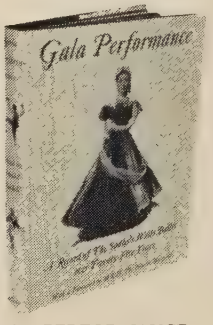

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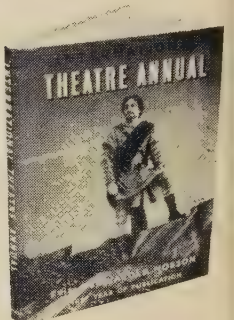

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